

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

STEP ELEVEN: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

With HP's Help

NEW MEETINGS

**Detroit Lakes -
Sundays at 6pm.**

**Minnetonka -
Tuesdays at
7:30am.**

**Big Book Meeting
Thursdays at 7pm
in Chaska.**

HOT LINE

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

“We now have a new reaction when we face a problem or a decision, whether it has to do with food, with life, or with our own runaway emotions. Instead of acting on impulse, we pause long enough to learn God’s will”.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA, p.26

August - The last month of summer is a warm, beautiful month in Minnesota. It also brings some sadness as summer draws to an end and colder weather ascends upon us. This year, August brought great challenges to my family. I sat in an OA meeting and talked about the anxiety I was feeling. Three family members were facing major medical issues. I had turned down a seasonal job offer as I knew that I needed to provide assistance to at least one family member and as many as three. My brother was hospitalized with two life-threatening infections as well as kidney failure. My father-in-law had been hospitalized for a knee replacement and was now in a nursing home trying to recover from surgery and an antibiotic-resistant infection that had taken over. My husband was, also, recovering from a knee replacement – very successfully, but in need of daily assistance. As it turned out, my husband asked for more care than I had anticipated with transportation, physical therapy and round-the-clock availability. He was generally polite about it and appreciative enough. My father-in-law received lots of help from a large family, so my responsibilities were limited. My brother, however, wanted more help from me than I thought I could provide. I won’t go into details, but suffice it to say, that OA helped immensely!! I discussed it with OA members, prayed for guidance from my HP and responded in a way that I couldn’t have, prior to my involvement with OA. My conversations with my brother were clear and without anger. I reacted in a way that didn’t require making amends afterwards. As a result, I did not attack the food. Prior to OA, I would have held my emotions in and when alone, would have started my binge eating. My binge-food of choice would have been set in...OA and my HP helped me navigate a challenging August. The focus on gratitude, the focus on giving up trying to control everything and the focus on facing one day-at-a-time made all the difference.

"I become conscious that I am not in a position to control a particular person, place, thing, situation, circumstance, or event. As the trust builds, I experience increasing peace of mind and a new reaction to stress, fear, anxiety, frustration, and disappointment: the desire to ask for help. Instead of the knee-jerk reaction of stuffing my face, I pray when I am in distress..." 10/5 *Voices of Recovery*

Diane G. Shakopee, Tuesday

Serenity in Celebrations

It took me a few months to get back to abstinence when I relapsed over the holidays. I have since learned from other OA members several things we can do to handle the challenges of special holiday foods and stressful gatherings. First, we keep going to meetings and do all the everyday things we've learned that help us to be abstinent. There is no requirement to eat those holiday foods that are not on our plan. Be the last person to start eating. If it is a buffet, be last in line. The foods that are the most tempting binge foods may be gone by the time you go through the line. Have a phone buddy lined up to talk about your plan of eating, someone who will expect your call if you encounter a difficult situation. Set up an exit plan when going to a social event that could threaten your abstinence. Let people know that you might have to leave early. If the party or visit feels dangerous, the host will be understanding when you need to leave. If the party is fun, feel free to stay. Make the focus on the people, not the food. Be friendly and engage others, especially the children. Mom and Dad will be grateful for the attention. Lastly, keep going to meetings and do all the everyday things we've learned that help us be to abstinent. Sometimes we eat compulsively after the fact when we let our guard down. Watch for this when you return home from the gathering and have a plan.

Joe W. Shakopee, Tuesday

Recovery Tapestry

How would I describe my Recovery Tapestry? What program threads have I used to weave it?

Exercise from *Voices of Recovery Workbook, January 8th*

My recovery tapestry starts out threadbare. It stays thin for a length, woven with dark colors and it is patchy with many holes. There are sporadic areas made of haphazard, heavy stitches that look hurried and unpracticed. These messy bits of tapestry are woven in bright, flashy colored threads. They run for varied lengths, but they never amount to much before the splashy colors and heavy threading become dull and thin, leading to yet more holes and darker colors in the tapestry. So much of my tapestry looks this way until there is finally a subtle lightening of color and some consistency of weave. Not anything vulgar or elaborate, just something simple, something honest. It takes some length of the tapestry, but as it continues on, the weave itself begins to thicken and the holes aren't holes any longer, only small areas of loose weave. Even in the occasional flawed area, the colors remain brighter, and in this more consistent length of tapestry there are intermittent threads of gold. My tapestry is yet unfinished with no end in sight, but where before there was no discernable pattern, now it is woven into a clearer image of happiness. It is woven with many materials, but the threads that have made it strongest are meetings, a plan of eating, anonymity, sponsorship, literature and writing to name a few.

Brad W. Minnesota

More Than Three Gratitudes

It has been said that, "Relationships take work." Usually this includes good communication. As I worked up to Step 11, my relationship with my HP, whom I call God, has really deepened. I had been doing the 1, 2, 3 Step Polka for a couple of years; being abstinent for 1 month, then relapse. Then 60 days, and relapse. I kept going to the meetings and trying to listen more and talk less. I kept reading OA literature, and writing my thoughts. I also increased my service beyond just my home group, and become an Intergroup rep. I got to 90 days, and felt REALLY good physically, but still not so great emotionally. I added a 2nd meeting each week and found a lot of good fellows with good recovery. I started doing service there too. At that meeting they were studying the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous for 45 min after the meeting, and I really dug in to it. I put together 120 days, then relapsed from Thanksgiving through Christmas. I had a couple of sponsors, but had no regular contact. I was again back and forth. I attended the Buffalo Retreat, and found a sponsor. We started daily calls, with me reporting my food plan daily. She has me reading and writing daily as well as sharing with her three gratitudes. I have been abstinent since our second week together, and this week I am celebrating 6 months.

Before recovery I had been using food to help me cope with a roller coaster of emotions. Once I became abstinent the first time, I enjoyed a brief reprieve from food cravings and preoccupation with food. It wasn't long, and my emotions keep bringing me back to relapse. I later learned in the Big Book that what we can expect is a "daily" reprieve. I stopped trying to be abstinent for the rest of my life, and instead, started focusing on not compulsive eating one day at a time. That seemed less daunting. But with even that, it wasn't long, and I was back in the food because I couldn't manage my emotional pain.

Working Steps 7, 8 and 9 really brought some beautiful emotional healing. I finely had cleaned up "my side of the street." Forgiveness and no longer needing to blame anyone gave me freedom to stay focused on "one day at a time." Step 10 helps me keep my side of the street clean.

Focusing on doing things daily, Step 11 took on a whole new dimension. Prayer and meditation were not just suggestions. They became a daily need. They offer me peace and acceptance of myself and others. I cannot even hope to be abstinent, if I don't reach out and ask God to help me with my intention to be abstinent before my feet even hit the floor getting out of bed.

I only count my abstinence one day at a time. When I look beyond the grace and mercy that is new for me every morning, I fail every time. I know this from experience. God does not want me to get ahead of myself.

I only know I am at the 6 month mark, because my sponsor told me. I asked her to keep track for me, because there was something about hitting a milestone that started to play with my mind.

I am only given one day at a time. My energy and time are spent on what I can do on this day only. November is the month when the formal Thanksgiving holiday is celebrated. I found that my prayer and meditation started when I simply started counting my blessings daily. During my daily writing, my sponsor had me start writing down three gratitudes to share during our daily phone calls. I found that three were too few. My gratitude list keeps increasing and now I can easily find 10 things I am grateful for each day. I take time daily to thank my HP (God) for them during my time of prayer and meditation.

Lucinda Shakopee Tuesday



The December 2018 **Expressions of Unity** will focus on 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.” 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 November 30 to ExpressionsofUnity2018@gmail.com.

Be Part of Unity Intergroup in Action!
 The next meeting is November 10th 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

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|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
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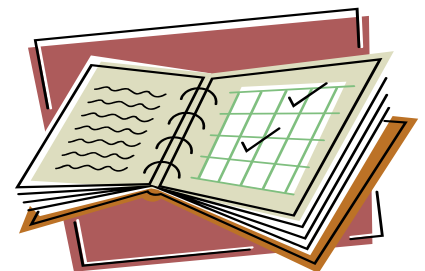
New Storage Unit

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

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| November 10 | Intergroup Meeting |
| November 17 | 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.