

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

STEP SEVEN: “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”

I Give Up!!

**Having a problem
with food, weight
or purging?**

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

Arriving at Steps 6 and 7 after working 1 through 5 felt a bit like plunging into the pool at the bottom of a long, intense water slide. After my 5th Step, I found myself at peace, but also a bit stunned by it all. And up to this point, there had been lots of information about each step in the literature (I used mostly AA and some OA literature at the direction of my sponsor) and I'd heard so much from others about their experiences, what to expect and so on. But in truth, I found myself a bit in the dark about 6 and 7.

After my 5th, my sponsor recommended I spend an hour meditating quietly about the work I'd just done. Next, it was suggested I read the first two paragraphs on page 76 in the AA Big Book.... and it turns out, that's Steps 6 and 7. Just two short paragraphs! Was I entirely ready? Yes. Then a recitation of the 7th Step prayer and... I'd humbly asked my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings. Was I done? I had worked the step but, like so many great truths I've encountered since joining the program, there really was no answer. I was done and I wasn't done.

I have a very deeply held habit of thinking that my character defects will be removed through *my effort* - keyword “my” - it's a story I have memorized and traced onto my heart and mind over and over throughout my life. But it hasn't worked that way at all in recovery. In fact, the more *effort* and thought I seem to put into changing myself, the more I'm delivered back to: my self. But when I say “I give up” and I give all of me to HP... I'm free again for a moment.

Step 7 is something I work some version of every day now. Sometimes every hour. I often forget about freedom and take my will and thus my shortcomings back... and then I forget my forgetfulness. But eventually, a fellow traveler calls or texts and I remember again. In essence, I say “I give up” and I breathe in my Higher Power.

“Thy will not mine be done. Please. Thank you.”

So for me, Step 7 is another version of saying “I give up.” Today I'm grateful for the willingness to give up.

- Matt O. A Compulsive Overeater who attends “There Is A Solution” Wednesday Nights at 7pm Hamline Methodist Church In St Paul, MN.

An Inspired Hiking Trip

This trip was a spiritual, emotional and physical journey, as we are always saying in OA. But I will try to keep it simple here in case my experience is helpful to any in our fellowship.

I'm 68 years old, never have resembled an athlete, and for most of my life rating a B minus on overall fitness. I have never been "slim" and have been in the "obese" category for about 30 years. I came to OA when I was approaching "morbid obesity" on the body mass index. Since then, 20 months ago, I've lost almost 40 pounds. I'm still in the "overweight" category, but very happy about that good start. I'm even more grateful for the spiritual and emotional benefits of OA, the support and connection with my Higher Power (which I call Deeper Connections), the wisdom of the 12 Steps, and all those I've met through meetings, especially my sponsor and sponsees. So let me try to summarize this trip!

I felt called and inspired to do this trip, partly because of the weight I've lost and overall improvement in my fitness, but also the spiritual growth. I don't even want to call it courage, more a feeling of "maybe I can" and "maybe I should", along with the importance of balancing "footwork" - practice and preparation—with trust, surrender, prayer and meditation, and accepting support from my OA connections as well as friends and family.

My plan was to hike the Superior Hiking Trail from the Canadian border to Grand Marais, 8 days of solo hiking and 7 nights of tenting, 53 miles total. I had to make some changes along the way, and ended up hiking 7 days and tenting 5 nights, but I put in 55 miles total, a bit more than planned. Yes, it feels wonderful to do that. I did lose a least 4 pounds in the process, very welcome because my weight seemed to be at a plateau before that—but truly that is the least of my pleasure on this trip.

I planned the food carefully. My usual eating plan (that I'm back to now) is three meals a day and no snacks, with two foods I plan to never eat. After reading that I would need some of those foods for energy, I decided to plan one snack per day in addition to the meals, and let the meals include small amounts of my usually not eaten foods. I would carry (along with everything else I needed: tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, two extra layers of clothes, tiny cookstove, ect.) 64 ounces of water to be refilled each morning.

One of the most interesting results: I was overall much less interested in food than I expected. The first two meals I had overestimated the serving size and felt too full. Sometimes I was just too tired to heat water on the little stove. Sometimes for lunch I just ate the very modest "main dish" and skipped the side items, just not hungry. But throughout, I craved water and drank lots of water at every opportunity. Seeing all the little creeks and ponds, and learning how much water I exhaled every night in the tent (had to dry the inside of the tent before repacking every day), I learned once again that we humans are basically made of water—and remembered my Pueblo native friend who says, "When you are down, talk with water."

The best thing that I ate the entire time was an apple (there, I mentioned a specific food). It seemed like maybe the best thing that I had ever tasted in my entire life. I continued to love my morning cup of coffee with a passion— in fact, that's what got me out of the tent on many cold mornings. It was 35 degrees the first morning that I woke.

I had many creaky and achy body parts on the trip, and one knee began hurting enough that I had to change the trip plan, take a break and avoid some steep sections. I also noted, doing a yoga pose, that I still have some body parts that look exactly like my mom's, wobbly and blobby and not beautiful. But I had so many moments of learning to love and appreciate my body, which more than balances that. That I could do this at all! One night I realized that my feet were massaging each other - aww. One hot afternoon I had stripped down to my "muscle shirt" and went tromping down to the creek in my big heavy boots, hoping the young guys sharing my campsite would think that I was Xena Warrior Princess. My feet were also very happy when I could wear simple sandals for "camp shoes".

And so many other physical pleasures. I did not think a lot of deep thoughts. Probably half of my consciousness was focused on very simple physical tasks like where to place my foot while working my way along the trail with many roots and rocks, or detouring around a down tree or getting across a mud puddle. That was a relief from my usual worries and anxieties about all of my projects and relationships. Noticing the many times that I was too cold or too hot, or no good place to sit for a rest, just living in that body awareness, hard to say why that was wonderful, but it was. One day I was very hot, having hauled myself and big pack up the hill and through the brush - and just then came a cool breeze ohhhh, and I felt the message- ACCEPT. I thought I needed to struggle on somehow, with so many miles to go yet, but no, I just stood for a few minutes and accepted that blessing.

I did feel enormous spiritual connections— and I'm one who doesn't even like that word "spiritual", but I have been learning in OA that not all of those things need to be put into words. I was not bored and did not listen to any of the podcasts that I'd brought along (I did read one cheesy novel though). My heart and my head were full of the beautiful things to see, hear and smell all around me, feeling like part of me (or me, part of the wilderness). I had been trying to write a song for my daughter as a Christmas present to her, and learned that I am far from being a songwriter. But while on the trail, in the last two days, the song arrived in my head, words and tune both, and I am happy with it. Another example of the need to balance preparation and practice with opening one's heart and listening the higher powers.

Above all, I wish that I could say more eloquently how much OA has changed my life and helped me. I wish the same for everyone.

Bonnie W. - Woodbury Friday10am meeting

Expressions of Unity

The August 2018 *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Eight “Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all” Although one meeting or group generally sponsors each newsletter, we welcome articles from anyone. Please indicate if it is okay to print your name with your article and email your contributions by July 28 to ExpressionsofUnity2018@gmail.com.

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



Come and join Unity Intergroup in action. All members of OA are welcome at Intergroup meetings.

The next meeting is on

July 14, 2018

12:30-2:30

Sumner Library

611 Van White Memorial Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Intergroup Board

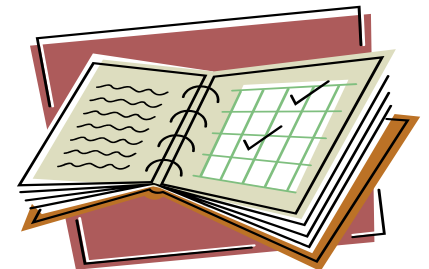
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Newsletter Coordinator's Note:

Thank you so much for the great contributions to the newsletter this month!! They are really appreciated and a great service to everyone in OA.

Mark Your Calendar...for 2018

July 14	Intergroup Meeting
July 21	Newcomer Meeting
August 11	Body Image Workshop



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.