

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

STEP THREE: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

Marvelous, Magical and Mandatory

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.

Newsletter Coordinator’s Note-

This month’s “*Expressions of Unity*” newsletter is longer than usual due to some confusion about where to send the articles last month. For this reason, the newsletter is covering both Step 3 and 4. Next month’s newsletter will be a bit extended too with other articles.

Thank you so much for the great contributions!!

I am a compulsive eater. For almost a year and a half I have worked the Twelve Step program OA HOW. Every step is important and I reap the benefits of working each one of them on an ongoing basis.

But there is one step that is like a buoy to me every time I flounder or start to lose sense of my location or direction. This is the Third Step: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.” The whole success of our program hinges on having the complete trust and willingness to let go of the wheel—to recognize that the little boat, with me as the only passenger, was adrift and colliding with others. It was a lie that I bought into for so many years.

When I finally woke up and realized that this lie that there was an “I”, who was an entity of its own, who could exist independently of others, was actually the very thing that kept me from getting to where I wanted to go, I surrendered to my Higher Power.

In taking the Third Step, my experience has been that it is, like the program itself, a work in progress. Initially, I experienced this wonderful communion of self and others/universe. In response to this miracle, I was filled with gratitude and positivity, which in turn wrought a positive response from others. Then as time went on, and habitual insidious patterns wormed their ways into my life again, I lost touch with this wholesome new world. But with reminders from my HOW friends, I revisit the Magic step and in no time I feel a part of things again (as opposed to apart from things!). And so, I am finding, by returning to heartfelt prayer and surrender, God responds unfailingly.

When I make the decision (and eventually, it will be as much a part of my practice as the Serenity Prayer is) to turn my will and life over to the God of my understanding, I am letting go of the pseudo-person I used to be, freeing her from



Unity Intergroup presents:

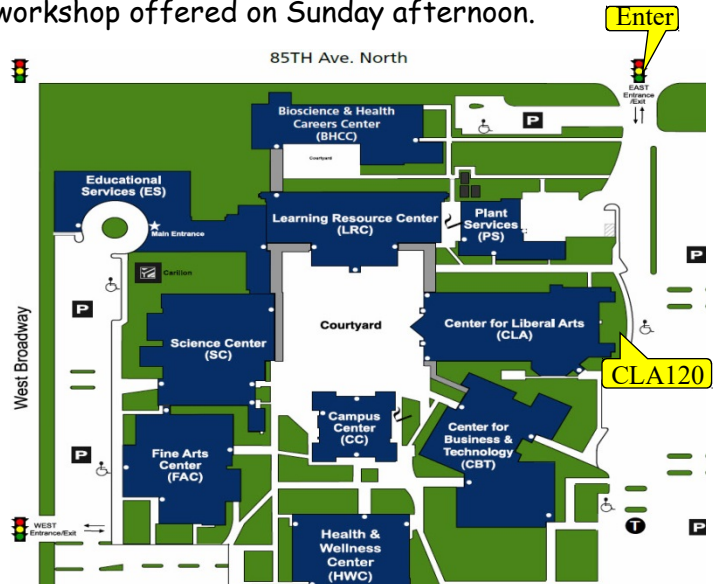
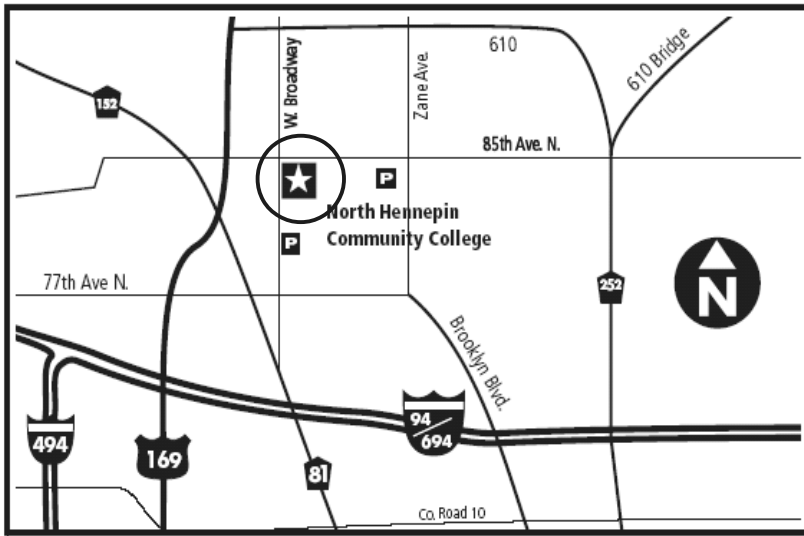
13th Annual Find Abstinence Through the Big Book Workshop & Webcast May 18th, 19th, & 20th, 2018

North Hennepin Community College, Building CLA Room 120
[7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445](http://7411.85th.Avenue.North.Brooklyn.Park.MN.55445)
Free Parking, ADA Compliant Building (nhcc.edu)
Workshop Cost \$21 (early) or \$26, \$16 webcast
Books/Materials/Supplies available for sale

Big Book Study Hours:

Friday May 18th registration opens 6:00 p.m.
Friday May 18th Event 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Saturday May 19th registration opens 8:30 a.m.
Saturday May 19th Event 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday May 20st Event 9 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

- ★ **New and exciting for 2018:** join our American (NJ) and Canadian (Winnipeg) **co-leads** for this transforming step-by-step study revealing how the message in the Big Book works for compulsive overeaters.
- ★ **"I finally found abstinence after two years with the help of this workshop!" ~Anonymous**
- ★ Our speakers will also go into detail on actively working all 12 steps. The Step 4 - 9 inventory process will be taught and an additional personal inventory writing workshop offered on Sunday afternoon.



- Info - edmundson.randee@gmail.com
- Meeting will be **broadcast** live in **HD** via the Internet
- Plus **Sunday** afternoon hands-on inventory workshop
- Super comfortable roomy **lecture hall!**
- Historically and graphically rich **presentation**
- Microwave available (no fridge)
- Our **FAQ** is a must read – www.overeaters.org
- Two strong presenters sharing experience and wisdom
- Scholarships freely offered
- Mail-in registrations confirmed via email only

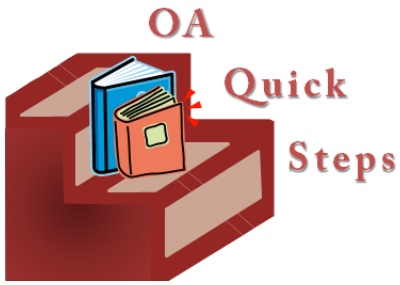
Register online at overeaters.org or
Send form & check payable to Unity Intergroup:
Kari E, 1376 Langford Trail, New Prague, MN 56071
karihogen@hotmail.com
\$21 discounted registration ends May 11th

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Please contact me for service opportunities

Onsite \$21.00 Quantity Webcast \$16.00 Quantity Total Amount Enclosed _____



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, April 21, 2018
and Saturday, May 5, 2018
Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm**

Location

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

To register, contact Lucinda at 952-451-9374 or choosejoy1600@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.

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

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

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

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.

her self-imposed exile, and letting the real me free to be real with others and to create a beautiful, loving world together.

Lest this sounds like life will have no more struggle - it will, for sure - and maybe even more than before if that is God's will. But that kind of struggle will, I trust, (I've had some glimpses) be gratifying and even joyful, because I will know that it is helping to steer a mighty wonderful ship.

I used to like to say, "Love is an active verb." Well, taking Step Three is an active verb - you cannot do it right unless you show up, you trust God, yourself, your intuition and go with it. You will be amazed how the universe shows up in kind!

Elizabeth R.

"Flickering Candles in a Windstorm"

The Third Tradition: "The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively."

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous tell the story of how this fundamental tradition came to be— beginning with an acknowledgement:

Most of those who did join us were like flickering candles in a windstorm. Time after time, their uncertain flames blew out and couldn't be relighted. Our unspoken, constant thought was, "Which of us may be next?" Everybody was scared witless that something or somebody would capsize the boat and dump us all into the drink.

Thus fear was underlying the fellowship's judgment and exclusion of those who were not abstinent, despite their desire. Turning to a power greater than themselves, these AA pioneers found (as have many of us in our recovery journey) that the antidote for fear is faith and action. Faith leads us to humble acceptance, and action leads us to showing love and compassion to all who cross the threshold into our meetings with only a desire to stop eating compulsively.

All those in OA meetings have two things in common: (1) our disease and (2) our recovery journey. Yet each of those commonalities among us is completely unique. The Third Tradition is so very simple. It merely asks us to open our hearts to all who are suffering and lovingly to invite them to "keep coming back"

Kathryn E.

Owning My Self Worth

Grumbling stomachs, hangry looks and no planned lunch break was the scene at a long staff workshop that I attended recently. When noon rolled around and three more hours loomed ahead, I knew that I had to eat what I had committed. I have always had a hard time eating when others aren't, especially if I know that I can't share because it's my committed food. Being Minnesota "nice", the thought of pulling out a delicious and full-sized meal in a brainstorming circle with no intention to share was too much for me. So I slipped out and scarfed down my meal in the entryway alone. It was a lot like my old compulsive eating days, binging in secret, even though it was an abstinent meal. I returned to my seat and noticed other coworkers eating their own packed lunches, in the circle, with people. Why was I so ashamed? Why couldn't I also just eat with others? Or even have the confidence to take care of myself? It comes down to my character defect of people pleasing.

On a phone call later that night I talked about it with another fellow, and they reminded me to "own my self care" and not own other people's. I had taken the extra time to pack a lunch because I knew that it would be a long meeting. As a believer in the HOW concept, I always pack my weighed and measured food that I commit each day. To prioritize a healthy body and mind was a choice that I made to take care of myself. Other people make their own choices too, and it's not my responsibility to make sure that everyone is comfortable. Likewise, it's not my responsibility to be liked by everyone, it's to be abstinent. It seems simple, but for me it was a mind shift. I rolled back my mental tapes, and it made me wonder what other areas in my life am I jeopardizing my own self care for the sake of being "nice"?

That "niceness" or people pleasing was one of the triggers that caused me to turn to food. I would go along with the crowd or an idea that was against my values or harmed me, and to numb the uneasy feeling, I ate. Thanks to this program, I am learning the skills of connecting with my intuition and advocating for myself. From as small as pulling out the Tupperware of veggies and rice and nourishing myself, to as big as telling my boss that I won't lie on my taxes for their benefit, I am learning that this program is going to always ask me to be more courageous in how I live my life. To be more authentic. Even though I am still scared to speak up for myself sometimes, I know that I am not going to do it alone. I have fellows who have done this all before me, and best of all, I have a renewed relationship with my Higher Power. I am intuitively learning to do things that "used to baffle me".

-Anonymous

STEP FOUR: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Relief seeking missile

This Step provided me with a wakeup call to be conscious. Prior to doing a Fourth Step, I felt numb for most of my life. I had no idea who I was or what my purpose was in this world. I was caught up in what other people thought or might think of me. I had very little self awareness or self worth and my actions reflected this.

Growing up I was frequently given messages such as, “Children should be seen and not heard; Self praise is half scandal.” If one even thought to brag or repeat a compliment, I heard, “Don’t let your head get too big.” My first inventory reflected low self esteem, lack of confidence and fear of people, places and things. I had a huge bucket of fear and even a larger bucket of resentments. I had no assets or attributes that were visible or recognizable to me. I was a *relief seeking missile* - looking for a quick escape from my fears, resentments and people - the only coping relief I could count on was food.

As I write this now, with 37 years in OA, a miracle has been happening. Ever since I started the first Fourth Step workbook, each time I choose to do the foot work of writing my resentments, fears, and harms, I continue to have a broader perspective on what makes me happy, what makes me sad, and what can I do about this. These are fundamentally just basic questions, however, in my pre-program years, I did not see that I had any choice other than finding relief in the refrigerator or cookie jar.

Freedom is really about discovering who I am and learning to make choices based on my program values, feedback from my sponsor and in consultation with God through the tools of prayer and meditation. Over the years, I have taken many Fourth Step inventories and I am grateful that I learned that knowing myself helps me make better decisions. The Fourth Step provides me an opportunity to review what is working and what actions or behaviors are in the way of feeling joyous, happy and serene in the gifts of the program. Only upon taking a thorough inventory of my actions, do I have the insights and tools to take the next corrective action.

Anonymous

Habit Check

I recently did a Fourth Step that focused on negative habits rather than on making a list of specific injuries done to a series of people over a lifetime - although that extensive Fourth Step led me to see the patterns that I examined in this recent Fourth Step.

One pattern that emerged was that I tend to volunteer in areas where food is part of the program, not a startling choice for a food-centered person and addict. Here is where I need to get honest and discerning; I'm often in charge of presenting a meal for 50 people after church, including cleanup and disposal of leftovers. I reviewed the number of times I have packed up leftover desserts to bring home to "neighbors" or boyfriend or the kids...only to stuff an empty Ziplock bag into the car trash before I got home and spent the afternoon in a carb stupor.

So I see a pattern. And rather than try to make good decisions on the fly, I've set some boundaries. This year the kitchen committee at church decided to serve a nourishing vegan meal instead of pulling crackers and cookies out of a huge stash in the church kitchen cupboards. Turns out others are also drawn to sugary/flour/fat foods, but appreciate wholesome food as the only option.

A trickier decision was that I will no longer agree to prepare desserts for special events. My pattern has been to volunteer to bake brownies or a cake or truffles...which means buying a ton of baking ingredients. This left my house full of baking smells and leftover ingredients, calling me to use them up to avoid "waste". Instead, I'm willing to buy commercial treats and send the extras home with others when a special occasion calls for dessert. This wounds my pride as a person who loves praise for homecooked food...but it saves my abstinence.

My habit of rushing into my day without a solid food and action plan leads reliably to impulsive choices. My growing habit of reading, writing, contact with my sponsor and a written food and action plan that becomes the scaffold of my day leads to better productivity, serenity and abstinence.

My character defects are more than anything a set of autopilot responses and habits that I can replace little by little with other habits that are positive. Habits are easy; repetitive decisions are tough. Once my Higher Power nudges me to look at a harmful character trait, the next step for me is to search for the associated habits and replace them with habits in tune with God's will. Then serenity and usefulness follows.

Bridget F.

The Gift of Step Four

This has been a year of transformation for me in my program of recovery. I found OA through a friend in October 2006. I knew then that I had found my path to healing and recovery. I have come to love the Twelve Steps as a practical and spiritual way of living. No matter what is going on in my life, the Twelve Steps offer me a path of serenity. As I first considered working the steps, Step Four seemed the most daunting. It has heavy words— searching, fearless, moral. Those words seemed to taunt and defy the advice that the Fourth Step is an “inventory” - like counting cans of peas in one’s pantry— suggesting a matter-of-fact and objective process.

Early on I found abstinence, refraining from compulsive eating, through “3 meals a day and nothing in between”. I got a sponsor and went through the Twelve Steps. Within 6 months I had lost 80 lbs and felt free. A year and a half in, I realized that I needed to eliminate sugar, and I did with the help of my Higher Power and my OA family. Even though “no sugar” was my baseline, over the years I realized that I have compensated for that by overeating other foods, and when life has been difficult, I began to engage again in compulsive food behaviors. I ate and overate, yet I hated food and hated planning meals and cooking. I continued to attend my OA meeting, but identified with the “still suffering”. Each week at meeting I felt frustrated as I heard the definition of abstinence, especially the part about “working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight”. As I watched the scale go up, I knew that I wasn’t truly abstinent, even with over 9 years of abstinence from sugar.

Last summer/fall, I met with my sponsor to revisit each step. In my conversations with her, I eventually noticed how much anger popped up as she calmly held up the mirror for me to see. It was ugly! I began to notice the anger popping up all over the place in my life. Work situations upset me. I had more anger-filled reactions to family. My doctor referred me to a weight loss program and I had an immediate visceral response of anger. Wow! For some reason, that really woke me up. I went back to my sponsor and she said two words in the Fourth Step process that flipped a switch- Self Acceptance. Accepting that I had anger helped me to step back objectively and wonder what it was all about. It helped me to not judge myself or feel shame— both of which are impediments to growth— but to step on the path of self discovery and healing.

What did I discover? Pretty much the same thing most of us discover in these rooms. The anger and resentment I carried stemmed from a sense of helplessness in my family of origin and once I became an adult, I hadn’t moved out of survival mode into self agency. For me, I had learned to never “talk back”, which in my situation had less to do with sass than simply

talking after the person with authority had spoken. I had not been taught or given space to say, "You hurt my feelings." I had even believed at one time that I didn't have feelings- "I don't get angry...embarrassed...sad...happy...gleeful." As a result, I harbored many resentments, stuffing the anger until it came out sideways with defensiveness in all my relationships, especially with those in my family of origin. I had always thought that "my part" in these relationships was that I should be "less upset", but that only created more resentment. I realize now that "my part" is to be honest about my feelings, address infractions as they occur with kindness, and to be open to criticism, suggestions and love.

I am eternally grateful to my Higher Power for this program and for the people who challenge me. So many things melded together for me in the last 4 months. I have had healing conversations with my mother, and with the dissipation of anger (it's gone...GONE!) now have an easy relationship with her. At the same time this was happening, I was able to back up a bit and consider my doctor's suggestion to try that weight loss program. In conversation with my sponsor and other OA buddies, with willingness, I adopted the suggested program as my food plan. I continue to be abstinent from sugar, but now I keep a record of each day's intake, and keep it roughly the same every day. My compulsive food behaviors have vanished. I am enjoying cooking and enjoying food. The weight I had slowly gained in the last 9 1/2 years is nearly gone in 4 1/2 months. After 90 days, I again felt truly abstinent. All beyond my wildest dreams. I knew when I entered these rooms that there was no turning back. I also knew that someday I would experience the promises of the program. I will keep coming back, not only to meetings, but to the gift of the Fourth Step.

-Deadra M.

Impossible Standards

It took me forever to do Step Four. In finally doing so, I was stunned by the number of people I held resentments against. In fact, I finally ended up including everybody that doesn't do what I want, when I want them to do it.

Realizing this and seeing the vastness of my negative emotion was an opening to me. I was carrying a layer between myself and the world that kept me from experiencing any joy. People, including myself, could never be good enough. I carried impossible standards of behavior where I could never find happiness. How was it that no one could do anything that could please me? I would always hold certain things up in front of me, making it impossible to succeed or able to grasp the presence of love that accepted everyone that I met and most deeply myself.

Doing this step allowed a different breath to flow through me, releasing the haze of food. Doing this step broke up the confusion and limitations of judgement and let me find a doorway into the divine.

-Katherine B.

Expressions of Unity

The May 2018 *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Five "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs"

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 April 28th 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.

April 14 and May 12 2018

12:30-2:30

Sumner Library

611 Van White Memorial Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Intergroup Board

Chair - Cathy G.	612-867-9804	cathyunityig@gmail.com
Vice Chair - Pat W.	612-804-4563	Godhpandme@gmail.com
Treasurer - Paula R.	612-387-6970	PaulaR.UnityIG@gmail.com
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**Join Unity IG by phone!
Conference Dial-in Number:
(515) 739-1034**

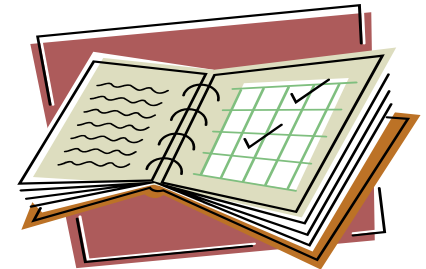
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Mark Your Calendar...for 2018

April 21 and May 19	Newcomer Meeting
April 6, 7 and 8	The Buffalo Retreat
May 18, 19 and 20	The Big Book Study



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 **last Saturday** of each month.