

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

STEP EIGHT "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all"

A List

NEW MEETINGS

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

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

**See flyer inside
for more info.**

HOT LINE

**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.**

Procrastination, one of my chief character defects, still haunts me now and then, especially when I'm fearful of not doing something perfectly. I want to write a "Pulitzer Prize" winning article on the 8th Step, but I need to get it done today (preferably yesterday), so I will accept "progress over perfection".

During the same week I was working on the 8th Step with my sponsee, my sponsor asked our OA group for volunteers to write an article on the 8th Step for this newsletter. Believing "there are no coincidences", I immediately volunteered to share my experiences working the 8th Step.

Together my sponsee and I had read Step 8 in the *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* while slurping down coffee at our favorite coffee shop. Weekly we get together to share our "experience, strength & hope" at the 4:30 Club (where both our HP's are also drinking organic coffee). While reading Step 8, we came across the word "amends" with the following explanation, "to make changes in the way we deal with people, not just to say we're sorry for our words or behaviors". Interesting how I never read this explanation before! Making changes sounds more difficult than an "I'm sorry", no matter how sincere we are. Change is frightening. Change is nothing I want to do, but need to do, so I no longer say or do things that negatively effect other's lives or my own. "God and fear are incompatible", so while serving the HP's another cup of coffee, I asked that fear of making amends/changes be taken away.

My sponsee and I also read that we need to make a list with all the names of the people we have harmed. Well, in the past I have taken the 8th Step numerous times, but I never made a list! The people I needed to make amends to were dwelling in my head/gut, fighting with each other to be the first in line to be told "I'm sorry". After rereading Step 8, I came to see the importance of transporting people/names from my head onto paper. First of all it's taking action, secondly the names of the persons I need to make amends to and the ones I need to forgive are right in front of my eyes. I can choose to write, after the names of the people I can't forgive, why I continue to be angry at them and get in touch with my real feelings.

It also says in the 12X12, "As long as we have not forgiven people for harms they have done us, we will find it impossible to make sincere amends to them for our side of the conflicts. In the past when I took Step 8, I first talked to my sponsor about how certain people had hurt me and why I could not or would not forgive them! She let me lick my wounds and then reminded me that I could not skip making amends and that recovery depended on completing Step 8. She then told me to pray for these people daily, asking God to bless them with all the good things I wanted for myself. I believed my sponsor was "God with skin on", even if she did drink tea!, so I listened to her and did what she said. I prayed and prayed (for two people in particular who kept invading my head and gut), and did forgive both of them and became willing to make amends. For one it took nearly three years to make amends, but with HP's help, I did it! Today, we are friends. Forgiveness and honesty were the beginning of a healthy relationship.

Finally, near the end of Step 8 we read, "We need to remember, however, that we can be willing to do something we don't want to do." I didn't want to make amends to most of the people on my "head list", and I doubt you will want to make amends to the people whose names you have written down. But I remember that the working of Step 8 prepared me to have the courage to face people I had wronged and to stop running away into the food. It helped me to forgive myself along with others, and accept that we are all human and "doing the best we can" with God's help. With that thought, I'm getting four more cups of coffee!

Ruth N.

Surrender and Trust

Step 7 Prayer: My Creator, I am willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do Your bidding.

From the Big Book Study: "In Step 7 we are going to practice new things in our lives, and a *personality change sufficient to bring about recovery*, a conversion, begins to take place.....we are asking the Higher Power of our understanding to remove us from that habitual and insatiable demand for the satisfaction of our instincts beyond our true needs".

Step 7 is about asking HP to remove those character liabilities I used to cope when I was eating compulsively. I know they are no longer useful. I know now that they're road blocks to being my best self. Earlier in my program I *heard*, "now I have to fix this." Nope! I am sincerely *asking*, and then letting go of that old behavior. My only work with Step 7 is the asking and then surrender. My Higher Power does the rest. Now HP won't play tug-of-war with me if I "reach" to take that liability back. I'm asking to have clarity and wisdom to take the leap and know that the work I've done in the previous steps leaves me strong. Strong enough to let go. I have the tools to live life on life's terms. It's enough, I am enough and I belong.

I had a spiritual awakening after some years in the program when I found drama and gossip destructive rather than exciting. I was realizing humility. I experienced insecurity and self loathing when I was in the food. I didn't feel I belonged. I didn't feel I was enough. So I blamed and competed to be good enough, to belong. I stepped on shoulders of people I felt more than, to compete with those I felt less than. Now that's insanity!

In the journey of recovering I came to believe that these are my sisters and brothers. We're all team; on the same team. We're doing the foot work and reaching toward recovery. I am a part of this team, as important and valued as each and everyone else. We're all trying to be our best selves, and live well. Why wouldn't I reach out a hand and help the next person? We all have the same goal. Life is not a competition, it's a group project we do together in which we all succeed. I'm happy when someone has an "Ah ha", and steps further in recovery. I'm there to help the one who fell down, as the team isn't as strong when one is left behind. Since my goal is that the whole team makes it, I cheer each person on as they cheer me on. This is a miracle of the program.

Procrastination and worry that I won't have enough led to rooms in our house that are not available to myself nor my husband because of boxes and clutter. When I retired, I brought home boxes from my classroom and storage areas to go through and sort. I've struggled in the past to tackle this project head on. I worried "what if I need this?" I struggled to let go. I was weary and felt I needed to refuel before tackling such a big project. I added to the pile when I needed another area of the house cleaned. It was huge baggage on my mind and energy. I did my work through the steps and asked for help. I learned that I felt a loss of identity, belonging, and a sense of purpose when retiring. Subconsciously, I was hanging onto this stuff. Then I came to the realization that a pile of boxes and miscellaneous materials and supplies wouldn't provide me with identity, purpose and belonging. They actually provided me stress and heaviness from the burden of needing to address them. They provided me with embarrassment that a part of my home is a mess. I realized that "my" mess was thrust upon my husband without his consent, as well. I worked the steps to release the hold the clutter had over me. I worked to surrender my worries of having enough. I worked the steps to let go. I asked HP for the willingness to surrender, the willingness to tackle it without perfection immobilizing me. I worked the steps to learn that I would always have what I needed. This stuff doesn't define me. It doesn't insure that I'll have what I need. I continue to tackle the pile one day at a time. I ask HP for willingness, energy and focus to keep whittling away. I surrender, I trust, I do the footwork. I took pictures of it at it's worst, and I take pictures of the progress and send them to my sponsor. Admitting that I have this mess, doesn't mean I am a mess. It has a beginning and an end. I am recovering, and I will reclaim these rooms.

I've taken Step 7 many times, and I've "grabbed back" liabilities I'd given up when I think I'm drowning. It's getting easier and easier to let go completely as I work further into recovery. My shoulders come down from around my ears. I breathe deeper. It's a relief from all of the time and energy I'd spent fretting, analyzing, justifying, and contriving to be enough. To belong and fit in. I can just be. I can accept life on life terms. I finally, in my bones, know what that means.

Humility is a relief and a gift. I am one with the others.

Ann G.S. Roseville, MN

Expressions of Unity

The September 2018 *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Nine: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others". 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 August 25 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

August 11, 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
Treasurer - Paula R.	612-387-6970	PaulaR.UnityIG@gmail.com
Secretary - Corey H	952-994-3989	corey.unityig@gmail.com

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

August 11	Intergroup Meeting
August 18	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.