

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

STEP FIVE: “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Half Way Through

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.

According to The Promises: “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.” A wise OA at my meeting once pointed out that Step 5 is “before we are half way through”. This stood out to me, because it was after doing my fifth step that I truly was amazed with this program.

When I came into OA I was a huge liar. I lied to everyone about everything, but most of all to myself. I find it fascinating how the mind works. I knew I was lying and hated myself for it, and yet I could not face the truth and continued to believe the lies. This is why I ate. So I could escape and just be numb.

Working the first four steps and using the tools helped me have less to lie about. I didn't have to lie about what I was eating, because I was following a food plan. Since I was not in a food coma every night, I was able to accomplish the tasks I had agreed to, so I didn't have to lie or make up excuses.

But it was doing Step 5 that really changed me. Admitting to God, myself and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs was terrifying. This is all about being honest, something I have struggled with my whole life. But I had seen an improvement in my life and I wanted more. I had always thought that if anyone knew all things I had done, they would hate me as much as I hated me. Nevertheless, with the support of my sponsor, I told another human being everything I did. And he understood. He still loved me and even said he had done some of the same things. This was a miracle! I left that meeting feeling like a new person, someone worthwhile. I was amazed, and because I did Step 5 and continued to work the Steps, The Promises have come true.

Kate H

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Join us for a Twelve Step Within workshop,
sponsored by Unity Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

RECLAIMING & RETAINING ABSINENCE

If you are struggling with or wishing to strengthen your abstinence, this interactive workshop is for you! Includes speakers, small group discussions, and writing activities to create a personalized plan of action.

Saturday, June 23, 2018

9:00 am–2:00 pm

Registration begins at 8:30 am

Valley Community Presbyterian Church

3100 Lilac Drive

Golden Valley, MN 55422

Bring your lunch (and snacks, as needed) and writing materials.
Coffee, water and tea will be provided.

Register by *mail* or at **www.overeaters.org**

MAIL-IN REGISTRATION FORM

\$15.00 (attending in person)

\$10.00 (attending virtually—materials will be emailed in advance)

Scholarships available (call Sheila for more information)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I will be attending (circle one): In person Virtually

Payment amount: _____

Send check payable to **Unity Intergroup** to:

Sheila Lawson

3334 Edgewood Ave N.

Crystal, MN 55427

Questions? Contact Sheila L. at 612-845-3604 or sheilaklawson@yahoo.com.

“The third time is the charm.”

On page 45 in *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* we find a clear and succinct discussion on the isolation many of us as addicts find in our lives. We feel isolated from others—alone and apart. By the time we are beginning work on Step Five, we have already been attending meetings on a regular basis. Most likely we are working with a sponsor (regular or temporary). We have talked at meetings and on the phone between meetings, and we feel that we are making some acquaintances and possibly new friends through the program. Step Five is an action step, because it calls us to share further and in a more in depth way. We have begun to trust others and find more people who understand our feelings and attitudes when it comes to our addiction.

However on a deeper level, there is still much of ourselves that we haven't shared. Step Five has been a preparation for this sharing about new insights we have learned about ourselves. A fearless moral inventory is perhaps something we have never done before. It is time to move ahead in our recovery and take this new self-knowledge outside of ourselves to another human being. Sharing in detail will bring us new freedom and is the beginning of the end of our isolation. This first time I worked the steps I was encouraged to share my fourth step work as soon as possible.

I wanted to make sure that I found just the right person and that took several months. I have done a fifth step three times. For my first time, my sponsor suggested that I share with a clergyperson or pastor. I found a priest and asked him to hear my fifth step. I prepared by looking over a prepared inventory sheet I had done on a 4th Step Weekend. When we were settled in to begin, the priest said something about the Twelve Steps being something like the Ten Commandments of Eating. Being very new to the program, I kind of mentally shrugged and said I guess you could look at it like that. After a half hour he asked me to stop and think about how I could let God help me with these character defects. Then he offered a prayer for me to be able to follow through with my program and to keep up contact with my sponsor as I worked out these issues. I almost felt like I had been to confession and he was absolving me of sin. It was not a very freeing feeling, and I thought that I had waited too long between Steps 4 and 5.

My second experience with Step 5 was a bit better. I chose a woman that I knew who was a spiritual director, who was herself in a Twelve Step program. She had been advertised in a local magazine that I read regularly as a person who hears fifth steps. She put me at ease by saying just enough about her own experience with recovery but kept it professional. She didn't condemn me for the character defects that I talked about, but she had me look at one of them and then we “worked” together to see how I might come to see the good in these character traits, and how I might use them to develop inner strengths to achieve recovery. We prayed together and I did feel I was no longer weighed down. I actually felt that if a competent professional woman could spend an hour with me and really help to lift the burden of learning things about myself that there was hope in moving on to Step 6 with real freedom and confidence in myself.

You hear it said, the third time is the charm”. That was certainly true for me when it came to taking Step 5. I chose one of the people listed in the “We Care Book” in my home group. This person had known me for a long time. We had heard each other talk about our struggles with food over a period of years and had

Worked together on a OA retreat, weekly service, ect. This person was not a stranger, even though I had never shared my character defects with her before. We just got together over coffee and tea and talked and talked about discoveries I was making about myself that were creating stumbling blocks for me in my recovery. She suggested that I name three that stood out in my mind from my inventory. There were many more. I want to mention her method at this point. I know she believes in the three legged stool for a solid recovery.

We looked at PROCRASTINATION as example of how I might really build my recovery at this point. Her first question was “How does this trait relate to the food?” I began to talk and realized if I put off planning my meals or shopping in advance, I would sabotage my own plan. Her second question was, “How do you exercise?” “When and how often?” “Do you eat before or after exercising?” I told her that I always exercise in the morning and I have a high protein breakfast before I hit the Y. I also said that I had a mini breakfast afterward...a sort of reward. We discussed using food as a reward and how I might modify this by seeing it as a midmorning snack instead of a reward. How does this relate to PROCRASTINATION? I didn't want to put down the food too soon in the day??? Her final question was if I saw any relationship between PROCRASTINATION and my emotions or my readiness to work the test of the steps. You bet! If I waited too long to make amends, I developed resentments. If I waited too long, I wouldn't make the phone calls I should. If I waited too long to volunteer for service, someone else would reap the benefits of helping others with their recovery. If I waited too long to eat, I would get cranky and snap at my house-mates and probably eat too much. If I waited too long to look at my daily gratitudes, I would forget to be thankful. If I waited too long to let God into my program or to ask others for help, my life would become unmanageable and I would be back to the life that I had before OA. Her final piece of advice was for me to look at all of my defects of character and see how they made my life—and recovery—shaky if not totally unstable.

Try several methods of dealing with Step 5 and use the one that works for YOU!!!

Suzanne H. is a member of the Saturday morning Golden Valley meeting

TRADITION FIVE: “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.”

To me this tradition is the engine of the program. It keeps OA humming along. Thanks to Tradition 5, the people that came before made sure compulsive overeaters like us could find OA too. I was invited to my first meeting by a member of OA, who was handing off the ring to me, so I could take a hold. If it weren't for the welcoming faces greeting me at the door, and the warmth and understanding once inside, I would never have stayed long enough to work the steps and find the solution.

After gaining a foot hold, it was my turn to join with the group in finding ways to be a beacon for others to find their way to the rooms as well. I found that reaching out to the still suffering compulsive overeater is the best way I can stay aware of the power and danger of the disease. Working with others is an honor. It keeps me growing and it's a joyful way to show my appreciation and gratitude for my life being saved by the miracle of OA. Connecting with others in my group for this reason is very energizing, and there is nothing more gratifying than seeing another's life go from desperation and darkness to real hope and restored purpose.

Liz D. Golden Valley

Oh No!! Change!!!

One of the facts of life I struggle with is change. I prefer the familiar to the unknowable. It leaves me the safety of knowing what to expect. However, change can be, and usually is, a catalyst for better things. When I lost a job I loved in 2004, I found my abstinence and a job better suited to my personality and strengths. When my husband and I divorced, I was freed to focus on my recovery rather than the relationship. I recall a job I once had as a server. The cooks would turn our light on when we had an order needing delivery. When the decision was made to turn off the lights completely, I became a stronger server. You get the idea.

Our intergroup is looking towards a time of great change. It appears that we may have become “too big for our britches” with too many service positions for too few volunteers to fill them. We are seeing that we need to become what I heard described as “right sized”. This can be a scary proposition as we look towards doing fewer things, being sure we have the funds and the volunteers to support our activities—before we commit to them.

But as previously noted, change can be a catalyst to better things. The boogeyman turns into the blessing. If we are right sized, we will better enjoy the things we do, which blesses us as well as others. We will not be discouraged because no one is stepping forward. And best, I think we can find renewed excitement for our intergroup.

I was at the very first meetings of Unity Intergroup. At these meeting, decisions were made to form one unified intergroup out of two, and to name our new intergroup “Unity” —a name suggested and immediately and unanimously agreed upon. It was an exciting time with so much commitment, enthusiasm, and joy. We need to find that again.

Let’s all come together at our next meeting Saturday, May 12, 12:30 to 2:30pm at Sumner Library in Minneapolis. Unity Intergroup Rocks! Come be a part of the excitement!

Not Dragging The Chains

The OA program encourages us to live one day at a time. In other words, that says to me “live in today”. I heard a cute story about a man who was dragging a chain behind him on the sidewalk. Another man on meeting the first man asked, “Why are you dragging that chain? To which the first man replied, “Have you ever tried pushing one of these things?”

How does this little story relate to living in today? If I had not learned how to let go of the past through the Step work in OA, I would not know how to lay down the chains of the past. *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* on page 83 says, “the first nine steps of our program...(are) primarily intended to help us clear up the accumulated (emphasis added) debris of the past...”. After completing Steps 1 through 9, if I do not take the 10th Step personal inventory daily, and admit and correct my wrongs, I will drag the chains of the past into each new day. If I continue to avoid the inventory and corrective actions that chain will get longer and heavier each day as I drag the hurts, resentments, and anger from the past into today.

Similarly, if I try to live in the “what ifs” of the future, not staying in today. I will be trying to push the chain. It seems to me that pushing a chain is impossible, just as worrying about my future will not have much effect on what actually happens in the future. Looking back on my life, I find that most of the things I contemplated, worried about, or anticipated in the future never happened, which for the most part I can say “thank God!”.

If I am not agonizing over the past, and not anticipating the future, I have so much more physical, mental, and emotional energy to really live in today—one day at a time.

Anonymous

Minnesota, USA

Expressions of Unity

The June 2018 *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Six "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

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 May 2th 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.

May 12 and June 9, 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
Secretary - Corey H	952-994-3989	corey.unityig@gmail.com

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. For this reason, the newsletter is covering Step 5 and two other articles.

Thank you so much for the great contributions!!

Mark Your Calendar...for 2018

May 12 and June 9	Intergroup Meeting
May 19 and June 16	Newcomer Meeting
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.