

Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

Step 6. "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

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.

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Step Six

Step six is called the step of willingness. To become entirely willing, ready to surrender my character defects to God, believing that God would remove them, I had to ask myself two questions: What am I willing to do so that God can change me, and how do I work this step in my life? Working the first five steps helped me develop faith in God, while step six was about to teach me how to trust in God. For me trust is different from faith. It's personal, part of my relationship with my Higher Power.

When I found OA, I was powerless over food, and my life was completely unmanageable. All I expected from the program was a way to stop my compulsive overeating. I didn't care about anything else. Instead, I found that OA offered a spiritual path to recovery, and my life started to change.

It became apparent that to work the step, I had to confront my character defects again, but on a deeper level. The step challenged me to become entirely ready to empty myself and my life of everything that stood in the way of recovery. I was still selfish, dishonest, resentful and afraid. I was still full of self-will, unable to understand why the world wouldn't give me what I wanted when I wanted it. To tackle each defect, I went back and did steps one and four as well as six.

Step six required complete honesty, but it taught me humility and opened me to God's compassion and acceptance. I began to trust that I wasn't walking this path alone. God was there and it was God who would remove my defects, not I. I'd tried using my character defects to remove them, which obviously didn't work. Step six restored my power to choose a true Higher Power. What would it be: my addiction to food or God? Choosing God remains the heart of my recovery from compulsive eating.

I think of steps six and seven as a bridge between the others. Step six introduced me to an idea that culminates in step 12. That is, I don't have to learn to love myself before I can be of service to others. The program says just the opposite. It says I must help other suffering compulsive overeaters. Trusting that God completely removes my defects so I could do this, I became free of them, maybe not forever, but for today. *May 22, 2017*

So I've done the first five steps: admitting to my powerlessness over food; coming to believe a Higher Power I will call God can restore me to sanity; deciding to turn myself over to God's care; carrying out a rigorous moral inventory and then admitting my wrongs to another person. Now I approach step six where I decide to have God remove my defects of character.

Step six sounds straightforward and it may be for some people, but in my case I wondered how I could be sure that I was truly prepared to do it? Step six really goes to motive. Am I willing to wholly surrender to God and have God remove my defects of character? Am I willing to give up control as well as the pretense that I could fix myself? Can I trust God? Is God able to do this? Is God good? Am I worth it? Am I prepared for God to do this?

I'd imagine that everyone approaching step six thinks that they want their character defects removed. And certainly who wouldn't want the painful effects of their character defects removed, eliminating all of their damage and pain? But a deeper question is: Do I truly want the defects themselves removed? Can I trust my motives here when in the past some of them have been twisted (and only later did I even realize this)? Am I truly prepared to let God take care of this?

Add to this that I've lived with my character defects for a very long time and so at a deep level they can seem completely normal. Changing this is difficult and frightening, even if consciously I know it's for the better. I would guess everyone instinctively knows this and it's why we may have avoided getting help for so long.

Also, besides being part of our reality for so long many behaviors and character defects do things, provide perceived benefits: they can distract from emotional turmoil, give pleasure, provide a momentary thrill or feeling of control; or, as in my life experience, they numb me from feeling anxiety and emotional pain. Obviously my defects of character are a problem. But besides being harmful they can also provide things that I've come to value and depend on (even if unconsciously) – which is why it can be so hard to surrender.

But I think there is hope that I can decide to have God remove all of my defects of character and also find wholeness. My work on the previous five steps has given me more humility, increased freedom from secrets and new self-knowledge. Also, I have a sponsor to connect with and act as a sounding board. And there are the 9 Tools of Recovery which provide an arsenal of practical support. And, too, there is the support of my regular OA group which I think is one of the most powerful resources. There is hope then because I am showing up; because I know that I am not alone; and because I can apply our proven, workable method.

Troy B.

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.*

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Unity Intergroup Speaker List. Does your meeting need speakers?

Contact us for a list of local speakers willing to come share their experience, strength and hope at your meeting or recovery event!

We have 60+ meetings served by our intergroup!! This is a great service, especially to small and/or struggling meetings.

Contact Melissa A at melissa.oa.mn@gmail.com or by phone at [651-307-2510](tel:651-307-2510) to request a copy of the list.

Available speakers: Send an email to melissa.oa.mn@gmail.com to add yourself to the list of available speakers.

A chair and co-chair are needed for the 2017 Convention to be held on November 3, 4, and 5. Please consider this opportunity and contact Mary T. at mary-tunityig@gmail.com if you are interested or have any questions.

When I started my troubled relationship with food, I was 12 years old. Life had taken some terrifying turns, and I decided that losing weight would make it better. What started out as skipping lunch every day at school turned into anorexia and then quickly turned into a severe binge-eating/restricting cycle. I became completely preoccupied with the number on the scale, how fat or thin I was, and what food I would get to eat next. I lost interest in friends, and my ability to have fun and feel pleasure nearly disappeared. The only pleasure I now had was the countless decisions to break free of my diet and binge. This compulsive binge-eating cycle would continue for the next 40 years. Once the disease of compulsive overeating took hold of me, there was no turning back. I could not un-ring that bell.

After landing in OA, I started looking back at my life of compulsive overeating, restricting, and dislike of my body. I began to see how I used compulsive overeating and the number on the scale to cope with life (badly) and foster the character defects, or character defenses, I developed over my lifetime. The worst of these were fear, resentment, inconsistency, withholding, and lack of faith in myself or life. Taking steps 4 and 5 with the help of a sponsor, I got some clarity on my maladaptive responses to people and life. But as we have learned in our program, admission of a problem is only the first step; it doesn't remove the problem. How was I to become entirely ready to have God (higher power) remove the defects of character that I had been practicing for a lifetime? How could I find my way out of the prison of compulsive overeating?

Fortunately, I heard people in OA share that "the 12 steps are our roadmap." They promised that practicing the 12 steps was the answer. I saw transformations in others' lives, and I began to believe the message. When I worry about giving up my defects of character without knowing what will replace them, I practice faith. With step 6 I sometimes use the image of removing my character defects from the overflowing shelves in my home and putting them in bags. Then I set the bags out near the street for pick up and walk away. Although it is difficult and I am very attached to the things in the bags, they are cluttering up my shelves! I can't invite new ideas into my head and heart until I make space for them. It is said that the purpose of our program is to reach the still-suffering compulsive overeater. I can't do that until I am well, so I must make a choice. Fortunately, the only part of this I must do alone is to become willing. The heavy lifting I do with my higher power's love and guidance, as well as with my fellow travelers in OA who I am learning to ask for help, one day at a time. Kathryn Q.

TSW Corner

Welcome to the **TSW Corner** – a forum to share inspiration, hope and ideas for all of us in **OA**, whether recovering, struggling, or both. Here you will find stories of hope, inspirational thoughts, and ideas for helping you work your own program and carrying the message to others. We invite you to contribute your own Twelfth Step Within... because 'Together We Can Do What We Could Never Do Alone!' For more information about 'Twelfth Step Within' go to: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/resources/twelfth-step-within/>

CHOOSING TO LIVE IN THE SOLUTION AND NOT IN THE PROBLEM

When I reflect on living in the solution, not in the problem, it sometimes helps me to look at an example of that well-known picture representation which appears, from one perspective, as two faces, and by refocusing it appears as one vase. I think we have all seen many examples of this.

So depending on how I focus, things appear to be quite different. For purposes of the example, maybe the two faces can represent... living in the problem...like things opposing each other, and the vase can represent unity, a unified effort.

Are my efforts to secure my abstinence and to work the steps something I look at as some sort of burdensome obligatory exercise in limitation and deprivation; or instead is my work in my program seen instead as my great good luck to be able to partake in a miracle of freedom, a release from a malady from which I never could escape before? Am I going to be struggling with a problem, or living in a solution? It largely depends upon my focus... how I look at things, how I understand what I am doing, what I tell myself, what I say to others;

Am I at odds with myself in this effort, like two opposing faces, or am I at one with my primary objective, my recovery from compulsive eating?

I choose, for today, and just for today, to live in the solution and not the problem.

UPCOMING EVENT: THE ABC'S OF ABSTINENCE

(mapping out your abstinence and your food plan, and getting clear on the difference)

Saturday, September 23, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska, MN 55318 Cherie M. from California will be our guest speaker, and this will be her 50th time presenting this workshop

As the new 12 Step Within Chair I would like to encourage you to contact me with ideas on how we can help those still suffering, particularly those still in our rooms and those who have left. How do we help others find recovery? What can we do to share the hope we find in the rooms? How can we help others commit to a new way of life? If you have a story to tell about coming back from a relapse please put pen to paper and send it to me. We would like to have some of these stories printed in our Unity Intergroup newsletter and as a handout for our fall retreat to help others find recovery. Stay tuned for details about a fall workshop in a nature setting and an early summer centrally located workshop. "Together we can do what we could never do alone..." Carolyn S, 12 Step Within Chair 612-558-1556, or mngypsy545@gmail.com

Expressions of Unity

The July *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Seven: "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings." and will be sponsored by the: Circle Pines Saturday 8:00 am meeting.

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 June 17th to ExpressionsofUnity@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.

June 10, 2017 12:30-2:30

Sumner Library

611 Van White Memorial Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Intergroup Board



Chair—Mary T	612-940-7654	marytunityig@gmail.com
Vice Chair—Jill S	651-739-0212	jshortreed@centurylink.net
Treasurer—Suzanne J	952-220-5358	unitybills@gmail.com
Secretary—Rebecca W	612-267-2460	rebeccawellikunityig@gmail.com

**Join Unity IG by phone!
Conference Dial-in Number:
(712) 432-0360**

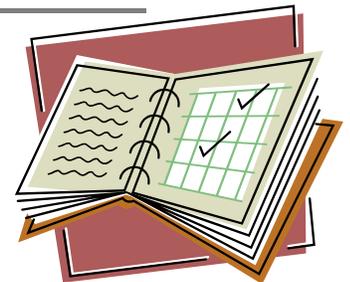
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Mark Your Calendar...

June 10	Unity Intergroup Meeting 12:30-2:30 pm Sumner Library MPLS
June 17	Newcomer Meeting 1:00- 2:15p Sumner Library MPLS
September 23	THE ABC'S OF ABSTINENCE Minnesota Landscape Arboretum



Web submissions are due the **first** Saturday of each month.

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 **third** Saturday of each month.