



Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over food, that our lives had become unmanageable.

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.

In this issue:

Step One Articles

OA Quick Steps Workshop
February 11 & 25

TSW Corner

Unity Intergroup News
- Page 7

The allergy of the body and the obsession of the mine

When I was first introduced to Step One, I really struggled to understand what it meant by powerless over food. I felt like saying I was powerless, was a scapegoat for not having enough willpower. I had no idea what powerless meant until someone explained to me the whole process of the mind and body in regards to this disease. I almost felt relieved to know that I had a lot of willpower, but my mind and body were powerless over this drug, called food, when I put it into my body. It was now starting to make sense why diets no longer worked for me and had never worked long term in the past.

Did I really think that my life was truly unmanageable? This was even harder for me to understand! I was very respected at my nursing job where I was in charge of my unit. My house was very organized and clean and my spices were even organized alphabetically. My calendar was perfectly color coded with all of the different activities and events going on in my life. My husband and my son seemed to be on a very rigid schedule each day. Granted, I couldn't control what or how much food I ate on any given day, but that hardly made my life out of control on paper.

As I started to work Step One and listen to others share on this step, things became much more clear to me. I began to understand the allergy of the body and the obsession of the mind and how that all played into me being powerless over food. When I took a closer look inside of myself, I truly began to see how unmanageable my life was. When I looked beneath the deep layers of my outer mask, I could see how unhappy I was in multiple relationships with my Family, Friends and Coworkers. I was not happy with my job. I was always an emotional wreck at home when things didn't go exactly how I had planned them or expected them to be. I was starting to see that I had really put up a front that things were perfect and was hiding behind a mask of chaos.

As I continue my journey in OA, I am filled with so much hope! I no longer have to use food as my solution. I can use the 12 steps to help me walk through my imperfect world, one day at a time. It feels so good to not have to hide behind a mask. I can continue to work on making progress and not striving for perfection. I am so grateful for OA, my HP, the 12 Steps, my Sponsor and all of my fellows that hold my hand daily on this wonderful journey!

Kari E.

My life is unmanageable—and I turn to food to cope

I like to think of this step as the following: “My life is unmanageable- and I turn to food to cope.”

I couldn't figure out what was wrong with me a little over two years ago. I was gaining weight at a rapid rate. I was having emotional outbursts and eating at all times of the day and night. I was experiencing all of the bedevilements found on p. 52 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. For example, “I was having trouble with personal relationships, I couldn't control my emotional nature, I was a prey to misery and depression, I couldn't make a living (peacefully), I had a feeling of uselessness, I was full of fear, I was UNHAPPY, I couldn't seem to be of real help to other people.” Yikes. That was the reality of my step 1.

I had all those issues in addition to being 100 lbs overweight, pushing a size 3X and feeling out of breath and having no energy to play with my kids. Out of sheer desperation, I cried out to my husband for help. “I can't stop eating!” I was researching gastric bypass surgery online because none of my old diet plans were working anymore. I quickly realized that we couldn't afford that surgery which was not covered by our insurance.

I had been back to Weight Watchers for the 4th time over a 10 year period and was gaining weight while sitting there in those embarrassing weigh-ins, trying to muster enough willpower to pull myself up by the bootstraps once again. I was hopeless and powerless. My husband kindly steered me away from the surgery idea, pointing out that my sister had that surgery several years ago and promptly became a serious alcoholic shortly after that. We did not want that to happen to me.

I got on the computer and found a local 5-day sugar detox retreat that is 12-step based. They taught me how to weigh and measure my food, identify my alcoholic food ingredients, and get honest with myself about the gravity of my disease. I heard story after story from people who had recovered from this thing that I thought was unique to only me.

Praise God, my Higher Power was working in my life and I didn't even know it. The past two years have been a beautiful journey. My most recent abstinent date is in July 2016 once I finally let go of artificial sweeteners and diet pop (with the support of a recovered sponsor), in an attempt to surrender more deeply and clear my head further.

Thanks to listening to recovered speakers on a phone meeting, I realized that artificial sweeteners are another binge ingredient that trigger the allergy and set me up for withdrawal symptoms and insidious cravings for sweets. By putting down all of my alcoholic binge food ingredients including sugar, flour, and artificial sweeteners as well as my binge behaviors such as grazing and nighttime eating, I worked through the steps via the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous method with a recovered sponsor from a Big Book study phone meeting at www.avision4you.info.

I have been abstinent AND recovered from this seemingly hopeless state of mind and body for over 3 months.

Over the course of two years, I am maintaining a release of 80 lbs and tons of mental baggage! By saying recovered I do not mean cured. I have been granted a daily reprieve from my compulsive overeating. I practice steps 10, 11, and 12 on a daily basis to stay in fit spiritual condition.

I feel like I have been given another lease on life. I finally feel useful, like I have something to offer to this fellowship, to my family, and my community. I can speak about recovery more confidently than in the past because I have experienced it. I can say that I have peace around food today and neutrality around food, something that I never thought was possible for me.

As the holidays surround us, I remain vigilant but do not have to white knuckle it anymore. I can be present for the family gatherings and feel relaxed and not stressed out about the food. I have learned to say no to certain situations and people that might threaten my serenity. I have learned how to practice self-care with the help of many fellows who have walked this path before me. I keep my OA network of people in my phone and at my fingertips for any challenging situations that come up and do 10th step inventories with fellows throughout the day. It is so peaceful.

I study the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous with a large group of people because that is the only method that has

worked for me to keep my disease and negative thinking in remission, one day at a time. I love the step 10 promises found on p. 84 of the AA Big Book. They are what keep me coming back and eager to share this message to the still suffering compulsive overeater and remind me of the misery of this disease.

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone-- even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor (food). If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor (food) has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality-- safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.”

Now isn't that a beautiful way to start the New Year? It's possible for all of us. Just believe and take action and reach out. Ask for help! Today! Don't wait another minute! This disease wants us isolated and lonely and eventually dead! Don't let it win!

Peace and love,
Anonymous.

Valentine Sponsorship Workshop—How Do I Share What Has Been Freely Given to Me?

February 18, 2017 - 1:00 - 3:30pm

Prospect Park Methodist Church

22 Orlin Ave, Minneapolis MN 55414 *Parking at Pratt Elementary across from church

1:00 – 2:00 pm ; 4 Person Panel Discussion

2:00 – 3:00 pm ; Workshop to Practice Coaching and Active Listening Skills

Practice Handling Topics That Emerge During Recovery

These include but are not limited to the following:

- Helping sponsees work the steps
- Dealing with unsupportive family and friends in order to effectively follow food plans
- Following food plan while traveling or eating out
- Staying abstinent and getting through the holidays
- Sharing strength and hope through your level of experience
- Benefits of being a sponsor
- How to help sponsees find another sponsor if difficulties arise
- Coaching & Listening Tools

New Meeting Starting!!!

A new OA meeting is starting in Faribault on October 5 at 6:00 pm at South Central College, Room B102.

Several Faribault people who were attending the Owatonna meeting (a 30-minute-drive) have pulled together, ordered start-up materials, and are posting the CAL posters in Faribault and Northfield.

We will have convention information available at our first meeting, too!

Eating and TV became my go to for solace, comfort, celebration, rebellion - you name it

I grew up in a family with a lot of kids, a lot of chaos and very little emotional nurturing. I learned very young to nurture myself with food and TV.

It was a bit unfortunate for me because my parents had much fear around having overweight kids. Some of us were put on diets as early as 10 years old and were paid to lose weight. It seemed very important to my parents. I had so much shame when it came to my body and myself in general. I look back at pictures to then and it does not seem that I was very overweight, but I grew to believe I was and began hiding and stealing food or stealing money for food. I stole quite a bit of money from my Mom - I rationalized it by telling myself it was ok since she was drinking most of the time anyway.

Eating and TV became my go to for solace, comfort, celebration, rebellion - you name it - it was a reason for me to focus on food. My brother and I once stole a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter and hid them in a guitar case in a closet. It was desperate as I look back on it now.

Because of the constant watching of what I ate and being put on diets as a kid, when I left home at 18, I swore I would never go on another diet. And I didn't! I am not like many in the program who have tried every program. I stuck to my word (kind of an odd thing to be proud of) and did not diet for the next 35 years. Of course, my obsession with food grew - it grew slowly - but it grew. Most of my thought life was filled with planning, shopping and creating the meals that I believed would nurture me, make me feel better. But it never filled me the way I wanted it to fill me; and it was temporary.

Just 2 years ago, after doing much of my own family of origin therapy work, I decided to start taking care of myself better. I began exercising, tracking my food and generally making better choices for myself. For the first year, it went well - I lost 30 pounds and was excited for the progress I was making.

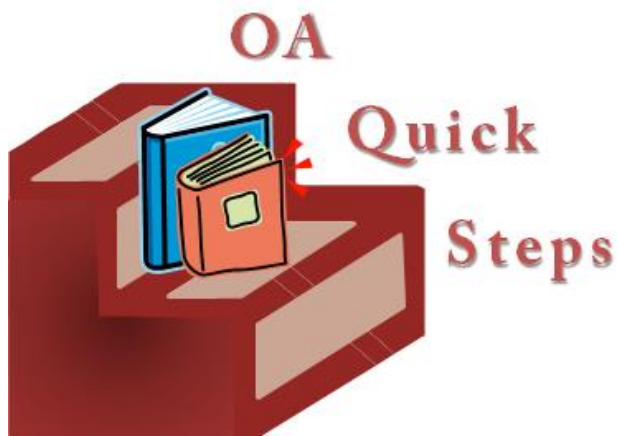
Then my Dad died. Although it was expected, and he was actually ready for his death, it still stopped me in my tracks as far as self-care goes. I began eating again and it had a different feel to it. It felt more desperate now and I could not seem to get back in control. It actually scared me, it felt so out of control.

So despite my resentment toward 12 step programs (my Mom was in recovery, but never really came back to mothering, but threw herself into AA which I resented), I went to a food addiction program and then continued in OA. I have found that I definitely do have a need for a spiritual program and that I can feel sane again.

It is hard work - I do not always like the constant effort to take care of myself spiritually. I sometimes have little tantrums about "why me" and "this is too hard". But my higher power, whom it has taken time for me to begin to know and trust, shows me that the effort in my addiction was so much more work with none of the benefit (except for that few minutes of quasi-relief when eating).

I have to say I miss what was familiar for so long. I have only been doing this program since September 2016 and it is still difficult for me. I am thankful to my husband, my sponsor and my home group for supporting me. And I am grateful to my higher power for holding me, even when I do not want it or think I need it. I do need it. I cannot do this alone.

Susan L.



**Are you new to OA or
just need help getting
through the Steps?**

OA Quick Steps Workshop

Saturdays 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

February 11 and 25, 2017

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 and work through the 12 Steps in just two weeks!

Location

**Nativity of Mary Church
9900 Lyndale Avenue South
Bloomington, MN**

To register, contact Gene O. at 952-835-0789 or oaquicksteps@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, three-hour sessions, plus homework. **Expect to be very busy** working on recovery for these weeks!

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.

Expressions of Unity

The February *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Two: “Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity” and will be sponsored by the New Richmond Sunday 6:30 pm 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 January 21st 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.

January 14, 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—Dawn S	612-310-1703	dawnspielman@mac.com
Treasurer—Suzanne J	952-220-5358	SuzanneJ.unityig@gmail.com
Secretary—Jill S	651-739-0212	jshortreed@centurylink.net

**Conference Dial-in
Number: (712) 432-0360**



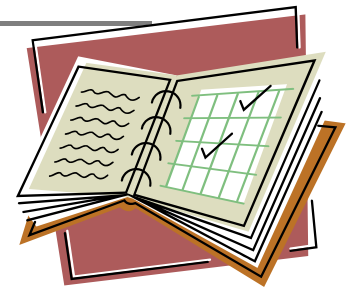
UIG Meeting Participant
Access Code: 468702#

Details of the telephone
system and keypad options;

[http://www overeaters.org/
conferencing.html](http://www overeaters.org/conferencing.html)

Mark Your Calendar...

January 14	Unity Intergroup Meeting
February 11 & 25	OA Quick Steps— Bloomington



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.