

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

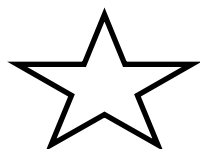
STEP EIGHT: “Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”

Created A Miracle In My Life

Minnesota State OA Convention

**Join us for the
“Gifts of
Recovery”**

**Oct. 4–5, 2019
overeaters.org**



Editor's Note

**Thank you to
everyone who
submitted an
article for this
month's
newsletter. It is
greatly
appreciated!**

My name is Scott S. I am a compulsive overeater, who is addicted to anything that gives me comfort. My home group is the OA HOW Monday night (6 p.m.) meeting in Rochester, MN. I came to OA HOW in August of 2018, and I am both a man (the only one in my group so far) and newcomer. I came in at 308 pounds and as an insulin-dependent diabetic. My blood sugars averaged between 300-400, and the insulin, at a very high dosage, didn't seem to have any effect. I seriously believe, if I hadn't come at that time, I would be either dead or crippled right now. Since coming in, I have lost 72 pounds and am no longer insulin dependent. I have recovered from a hopeless state of mind and body. OA, my God and my sponsor have created a miracle in my life and done for me what I could not do for myself.

When it comes to the 8th Step of making a list of those I have harmed, I review the list with my sponsor and go through the details of each amend with my sponsor. When writing the amends, we make sure that we do it correctly and make sure we will not harm someone more by making it. If someone in the program is like me, I can't see with clarity the current perspectives on something, and need someone else's eyes that can be objective. By the way, I am the only man in my group, but the women there are some of the best, most amazing people I have ever been privileged to know. They love me and honor me, and I try to do the same thing back. Come and see us!

Scott S. Monday Night OA HOW Rochester

A List Maker

I am a list maker. I make a list at work, at home, in all aspects of my life, I make lists. So Step 8 should be an easy step, right? I am great at making to-dos. I am great at doing and crossing things off. I feel accomplished and good when I get things done, feeling pleased with myself over a deadline met or dishes and laundry done. I am a human *doing*, sometimes not a human *being*. It is deeply entrenched and it is both an asset and a defect of my character. For the list maker in me, this should be an easy step.

But is it really? Step 8 is about looking at my part in all those resentments, fears and sexual conducts I purged during Steps 4 and 5. I see that I have patterns of behavior, both good (my assets) and the bad (my defects), that have either served me or hurt me and others in the process. I have to look at all of those things and write down in black and white those people (some I love and some I maybe hate) who I have harmed with my own common, broken humanness. The best part about this step is doing it and knowing that it doesn't mean I need to make the list and go door-to-door within seconds of its completion, though some people do that. For me, Step 8 was and is a process. I made my list, then I evaluated my willingness with my sponsor. For some people the willingness was there immediately, for others it was there but there were still some lurking rationalizations (yeah, but he did this or that too). When my sponsor heard those rationalizations, we looked again at my resentments and fears regarding the relationship and more was revealed. Then I wrote my letters of amends to each person, read, received feedback and refined them, not for being perfect, but to ensure I hadn't missed or omitted something that needed to be said. Then I made direct amends, following each letter to the point it was at. I remember making amends to my sister, who had to take care of us as kids because of my mom's alcoholism. I resented her then for her meanness but realized that she was a little girl being asked to raise 4 siblings, with neither help or freedom just to be a kid. Of course she was mean and I realized I never made it easy for her by hiding and picking fights. Even as adults, I would cringe inwardly every time she gave me unsolicited parenting advise or got bossy. I have come to understand that she did and does the best she can. She is "forever" my older sister and that is her perspective. Also in this process, I realized that some of the relationships were toxic, both to myself and those involved. Step 8: A list and willingness. Seems so simple, but it's not easy.

Sue Monday Night OA HOW Rochester

A Knife In My Heart

Step Eight is a two-part step with both parts combined to “learn better ways of dealing with other people, ways that would bring us joy instead of pain”. Step Eight goes beyond making a list, although I find writing each name makes my harms real. Step Eight goes beyond making things right. Step Eight is my beginning attempt to begin living in society without food.

I ate to fill the hole that I needed to fill with relationships, with God, and people. In my addiction, I had no choice but to eat. I would seek the comfort of food, wishing for a brief reprieve from living events, but finding myself unable to stop eating. I would find myself alone in the kitchen stuffing food in my mouth often without memory of taking the first bite. In my oblivion, I would ignore the people around me. One vivid memory was at work. Someone had brought a celebration cake. I went to have a piece but the plates and forks had been used. Rather than walking a few feet to the kitchen, I began stuffing the cake in my mouth, getting frosting and cake on my hands, face and clothing. A woman who I worked with was looking at me aghast. She asked, “can’t you wait a minute for a fork?” I could not wait. The cake was more important than taking part in the celebration. Cake was more important than the people surrounding me. Cake was more important than my self-esteem. Cake was supreme over my actions. I blocked out the people to feed my addiction.

In OA I learned how to put down the food. Now what? Obviously, I needed to learn how to have relationships. Step Eight is the means of re-exploring my relationships and making them right. In Step Four I made a list but the Step Four list was about me. Now that Step Four taught me who I am, I need to know who I want to be in relationships. This is the purpose of Step Eight.

A list. The power of making a list with paper and ink. The Ten Commandments is the most memorable. Didn’t we all make a list to Santa? Now I reexamine the people on my Fourth Step list. Not from my perspective but how I harmed them. If I do not move beyond myself, I will not find joy and freedom in my abstinence. And joy and freedom are what we were looking for in the food.

I studied each person I had harmed in my addiction. This was very powerful. Sometimes I felt the betrayal of people in my life like a knife in my heart. But I needed to look. I needed to own my part of my withdrawal from society. I relied on God and my fellowship to support me during this time. I was vulnerable, I needed to finish Step Eight and Nine to move on to Step Twelve and have my spirit wake up.

Willingness is not one of my characteristics. I want to be self-reliant, not God reliant. I had two options—become willing to make amends to them all or return to the food. Not easy choices, but the only options available to this food addict. I prayed for willingness daily while I worked Step Nine. I see Step Eight as a processing step. For me, it came gradually with prayer, talking to my sponsor, and in my hookup calls. Because it was so hard, I can use Step Eight in my daily inventory easily. Practice, practice, practice. Because I still harm others, even in abstinence, I have trusted tools to correct my human mistakes.

I am grateful I was given the courage by my fellows and God to work Step Eight. I could not deal with my addiction to food without the Steps, Traditions, and fellowship of OA.

Joan S. Monday Night Rochester HOW

The Subtle Things

The AA 12x12 offers a discussion about what, exactly, it means to have “harmed” another person. Somehow it does not seem so difficult to define when we are on the receiving end. To start with, we may feel encouraged if we have been “cash register honest”, if we have not physically injured anyone, if we never lied about the “big” stuff, or if we never cheated on our spouse. For me personally, however, I find my tail between my legs when the discussion turns to “some of the subtler (harms) which can sometimes be quite as damaging”. Because of my addiction to food, was I not emotionally absent from my family and friends? Didn’t I repeatedly lie by omission or commission about what or how much I had eaten? What about all the times that I manipulated the conversation in order to put myself in the very best light and, perhaps, make others look bad? Did I call in sick to work when I was actually suffering from a food hang-over which I brought upon myself? Did I put my best effort forward on behalf of my employer? Did my friends, colleagues and relations walk on egg shells because of my moodiness and irritability? As my disease progressed, I isolated myself socially because I hated my appearance. I broke promises and commitments. I spent my family’s money not only on excess food, but also on weight loss programs, clothing, and other impulsive purchases in an effort to make myself feel better. Yes, there have certainly been people who have suffered harm from my behavior, most especially those whom I love the most. Making my Step 8 list, however, is, as the 12x12 says, “the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from God.”

Anonymous in Rochester

Service Opportunity

Looking for an opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope? We have one for you! The Unity Intergroup hotline is in need of volunteers to return daily phone calls to people in need. Ideally we are looking for individuals to offer to monitor the line for a week (Sunday to Saturday), but will work with you as your schedule allows. The actual daily time commitment needed depends on the needs of the caller and can range from a few minutes to as much time as you are able to give to the still suffering individual. Please contact Kamie C. at 612-720-0413 for more information or to sign up. Thanks!

Okay...take my defects...and help me.

The first time I went through the 12 Steps, I moved past Steps 6 and 7 fairly quickly. They seemed so obvious and easy to me. Of course I was willing to have my Higher Power remove my shortcomings! Who wouldn't be willing to have that done? After that, all I had to do was ask my Higher Power to take them away...and then I would be perfect!

Being perfect, without defects...that seems like what I had been trying to do my whole life. I could be right all the time, finally truly being the smartest person in any room. Wait a minute, this sounds like a trap. Let me look at those steps in the Big Book one more time.

In Step 7 I am asking that God remove all of my shortcomings, my defects, all of those wonderful habits that I came to rely on during times of emotional distress!

I used to be frustrated with anyone who wouldn't listen to me, because, of course, I had the right solution. When others disagreed with me, I resented them for it. I would spend hours, often when I should have been sleeping, justifying my anger and fantasizing about the fate that would befall them for not listening to me.

In order to keep the truth at bay, I would eat. Eating is a strange way to deal with those rebellious feelings, but it put me in a kind of daze. When I was eating I couldn't be thinking of my role in the altercation. I had to concentrate on the food I was eating. It takes a lot of eating to push some anger and resentment into the background.

Well, the second time around with the steps, I spent more time with this request. If those defects are gone, I need a new way to deal with my resentment. Perhaps I could call someone and talk to them about it. Surprisingly, that works for me. Also, I practiced writing about the issue and looking at it from other angles. Seeing my culpability in the problem helped me. I also began to pray about my difficulties and I sincerely asked for help. I had to practice all of this many times.

By the time I got around to Step 7 the third time, I approached it very carefully. I was a regular at meetings, I kept reading about other people's responses to their issues, and I kept writing about all of this and calling fellows for help. Yes, I thought, I am kind of ready to have my Higher Power take my defects, if my Higher Power will help me to handle all of these emotions. Okay. Yes, I'm pretty sure...Okay...take my defects...and help me.

Kevin Thursday night Burnsville OA HOW

The Convention is Back!

We know that you missed it last year, so we brought it back and it's better than ever! Join us to celebrate the gifts of recovery at the 2019 Minnesota Overeaters Anonymous Convention sponsored by Unity Intergroup. The convention starts Friday, October 4 from 7pm to 9pm and continues on Saturday, October 5 from 9am to 5:30pm at the Best Western Plus Bloomington. The hotel is conveniently located near the Mall of America in Bloomington.

Experience the gifts of recovery at the 2019 convention, including -

- The Gift of Freedom
- The Gift of Self-Knowledge
- The Gift of Spiritual Awakening
- The Gift of an Authentic Life
- The Gift of Change
- The Gift of a Purposeful Life
- The Gift of Abstinence



We will explore these gifts by listening to speakers and panels and by participating in interactive sessions. The highlights include -

- Self-discovery exercises to unblock your best intentions
- Real life spiritual awakenings and how to get them
- Practical advice for handling food challenges at social events
- Demystifying food labels and what you really need to know
- Sponsoring from two perspectives as sponsor and sponsee
- How honesty gives us inner freedom and how admitting powerlessness over food frees us to work on the other Steps
- Practical ways to create an abstinent kitchen
- Listen to and mingle with OA leaders from other states

Come and join us to celebrate the gifts of recovery!

Go to the overeaters.org website for the brochure and registration form. Space is limited to 150 participants, so register early!



Schedule

» Friday

- 5:30–7pm: Registration check in
- 7–9pm: Main session speaker and panel

» Saturday

- 8–9am: Registration check in
- 9–11:45am: Interactive session and panel
- 11:45–1:15pm: Lunch, socializing/personal time
- 1:15–5:30pm: Interactive sessions, speaker and panel

Location

Best Western Plus Bloomington

1901 Killebrew Drive, Bloomington, MN 55425

Phone: 952-854-8200

Reservations

A block of rooms is being held at the hotel for OA Convention attendees at a reduced rate of \$114 + tax per night, single to quad occupancy.

Reserve by September 2nd to receive the OA pricing. Call 952-854-8200 and request the OA Convention rate.

Microwave, fridge, and coffee maker in room. Free full breakfast. High speed internet access.

24 hour airport shuttle service. To access call 952-854-8200 (15 minutes before you need a ride).

For more details about the hotel please visit the hotel's website at:

<http://www.bestwesternbloomington.com>

Mail-in Registration Form

Register Early! Space is limited to accomodate 150 participants. Lunch is included in cost.

Name _____

Name tag (first name, last initial) _____

Phone _____

Email _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Registration early rate (mail by 8/31/19) \$60

Registration (after 8/31/19) \$75

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send registration form and check payable to:

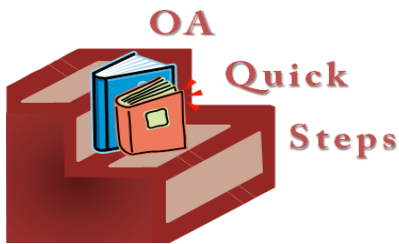
MN OA Convention 2019

PO Box 4204

Hopkins, MN 55343

Sorry, no refunds. If you are unable to attend, please consider selling or giving your entry away to another eager participant.

Registration Info: 612.377.1600.



**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, September 14, 2019
and Saturday, September 28, 2019
Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm**

Location

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

**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**

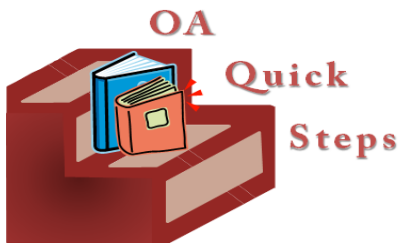
To register, contact Cecelia at 205-292-5242 or calaurie78@gmail.com. Registration is required as class size is limited.

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 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.**



**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, September 7, 2019
and Saturday, September 21, 2019
Time: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Location

**Zumbro Lutheran Church
624 Third Ave SW
Rochester, MN 55902**

**One of the
promises in the
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that before
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the obsession
is lifted.
Increase your
chance of
success—join
the OA Quick
Steps series,
get abstinent**

To register, contact Kendra at
LKYGRL61@yahoo.com or 952-270-
5258. Registration is required as class
size is limited.

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The September 2019 *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, articles from anyone are welcome. Please indicate if it is okay to print your name with your article.
Send all articles to



Be Part of Unity Intergroup in Action!

The next meeting is August 10 from 12:30-2:30 at the Sumner Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

All OA members are welcome to join us in person or on the phone

(515) 604-9700

Access code: 896976#

Intergroup Board

Chair - Cathy G.	612-867-9804	cathyunityig@gmail.com
Vice Chair - Betty C.	763-535-3939	books1216@gmail.com
Treasurer - Sheila L.	612-845-3604	sheilaklawson@yahoo.com
Secretary - Lonna R.	763-438-0596	lonna.rubesch@comcast.net

New Storage Unit

Unity Intergroup has a new storage unit. Lock Up Self Storage located at 701 North 7th St. in Minneapolis, MN 554511.

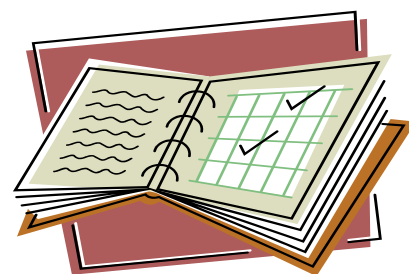
Contact Betty C. for more info

763-535-3939

Mark Your Calendar...for 2019

September 7 & September 21	Quick Steps in Rochester
September 14 & September 28	Quick Steps in Minneapolis
October 4 & 5	OA Convention

All articles written are the opinion of the writer and not of OA as a whole or of the *Expressions of Unity* newsletter.



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.