



April 2020

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

EVENTS

Big Book Study
May 29–31

Region 4 Convention
Omaha, NE, July 10–12

INTERGROUP

will meet via phone
on April 11th
12:30–2:00 pm
(515) 604-9700
Code 896976#

The current plan is to return to
Sumner Library on May 9th
11 Van White Memorial Blvd.
Mpls, MN 55411

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Unity Intergroup has two open
service positions:

**Region 4 Representative
and
Alternate Region 4 Rep**

To learn more, please contact
Annette, Region 4 Chair:
aryan52@comcast.net
763-447-3215

SPECIAL DISCOUNT!

Download all speaker recordings
from the 2019 Unity Intergroup
Convention for just \$5.00
overeaters.org/recordings-of-past-events/

The April issue focuses on **Anonymity**:
*How has OA's tradition of anonymity?
affected your recovery?*

We are crowd-sourcing articles for the May issue on **Spirituality**:
How do faith and spirituality enhance your recovery?

Please send articles to
ExpressionsofUnity2020@gmail.com
Thanks for your service!

OA Meetings in the Age of COVID-19

In an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, many meetings have been canceled, while others have migrated to phone or video. If you are unsure about your meeting, call the contact person on the [meeting list](#).

Phone and Video Meetings (as of March 25, 2020)

- Sat 8 am, Circle Pines – **Zoom/audio**: <https://zoom.us/j/414198166>
- Sat, 10 am, Golden Valley – **Zoom**, ID 979 084 450, PW 044071
- Sat, 10:30 am, Edina – **Zoom/audio**; call Margie 320-241-1967 for info
- Sun 6 pm, St. Louis Park – **phone**: 712-770-4598, ID 802505#
- Tues 7 pm, Live/Virtual – **virtual only**: info at mnhowlive.org
- Tues 7 pm, Shakopee – **phone**: 605-313-5876, ID 601117#
- Wed 1 pm, Crystal – **phone**: call Sandy 763-478-2963 for info
- Thurs 7 pm, Chaska – **phone**: 425-436-6398, ID 805270#
- Thurs 7:15 pm, St. Cloud – **phone**: 425-436-6307, ID 227491#

Additional phone meeting resources are listed on page 3.

All Unity Intergroup Board positions have been filled!!

- Leigh M, Chair: 612-244-5511 | aml45marr@gmail.com
- Marque N, Vice Chair: 612-655-6960 | thumprq@gmail.com
- Sheila L, Treasurer: 612-845-3604 | sheilaklawson@yahoo.com
- Kirsten S, Secretary: 612-839-5079 | focusonthejoy@gmail.com

We Are All The Same

I've been in the program a number of years and because of this, my life has been saved. A huge reason why this program works for me is because of anonymity. We don't share who our sponsors or sponsees are. We don't share who we've connected with that day. We don't tell anyone's story but our own and we don't talk about other people.

But what I most love and value about anonymity is we are all the same. No one is better or less than. The one with long term abstinence isn't more special than the fellow with no abstinence. Newcomer, old timer, relapsed, it doesn't matter- we are all equal. What our role is at work, what our salaries are, our socioeconomic level, our education—none of this matters. All that matters is we have an unhealthy relationship with food. Everything else gets left at the door when we walk into a meeting. We share a common problem and solution and we help each other.

The other thing I love about anonymity is none of us is special. I'm no better or less than anyone else. No one else is better or less than anyone else. We are fellows and members of an incredible fellowship that works if we work it. We need each other or we die.

Today, because of the gift of anonymity, I risk honesty and vulnerability with my sponsor and fellows, knowing my story and life experiences will be held sacred and not shared with anyone. I'm deeply grateful to AA and OA for the tool and tradition of anonymity.

~ Gratefully Anonymous

Grateful to Speak Freely

Anonymity is probably one of the tools and traditions of this program I am most grateful for. It allows me to speak freely and know what I say will not go anywhere. I was familiar with how anonymity was practiced in the A.A. program and was surprised and grateful for how differently, how strongly we hold true to it in OA-HOW. I found safety in this practice as do others. I have never heard my story being shared by someone else or had my name or anyone else's names come up in any conversations. No one knows who I sponsor, who sponsors me or who anyone else works with. We simply work this program together, respecting each other's past and life's present-day situations, and we encourage each other through our journeys in recovery. We don't do this alone and for that, I am grateful.

~Anonymous

A Deeper Understanding of Anonymity

When I first came to OA, my fellows taught me the “basics” about anonymity. I learned that what I heard at meetings needed to stay at meetings. I learned that we do not share who our sponsors or sponsees are (later I was surprised to learn this is not necessarily the case in other 12-step programs).

We don't gossip and we don't share who we talk to on the phone with other fellows. Over the years, I've never once heard anyone say, “I just got off the phone with so-and-so, and you'll never believe what she said!” We also don't share who shared what during meetings. You won't hear someone say, “guess what Mary pitched about last night during the meeting?” Instead, it's okay to say, “someone shared something really helpful at the meeting yesterday.” If I run into a fellow and say hi while with my spouse and they ask me afterwards, “how do you know her?” you won't hear me say, “from my OA meeting.” You might instead hear me say “she's an old friend” or “I met her in a class years ago.” These basic tenets of anonymity created an environment of trust for me. I didn't have to worry about people sharing what I told them—my secrets were safe.

As the years passed, I developed an even deeper understanding of how anonymity benefits us as OA members. Anonymity helps to keep me humble. There are no heroes in our rooms. During a meeting I once heard someone say, “I'm just another bozo on the bus!” This made me chuckle, but it's so true. I am no better or worse than any other member in OA. Because we are trusted servants, no one is getting famous or rising to the top of the OA ranks. A newcomer putting away chairs is just as important as someone doing service at the intergroup level. Anonymity is truly a spiritual principle of the program that reminds me I am one among many and I am so grateful for it.

~Anonymous

ADDITIONAL PHONE MEETING RESOURCES

[OA phone meetings](#)
[OA-HOW phone meetings](#)
[OA speaker recordings](#)

“A Vision For You” Big Book phone meetings: 712-432-5210, ID 876148#

Monday–Friday

6–7 am CST (recorded)

7–8 am CST (not recorded)

9–10 am CST (recorded)

Sunday Special Edition

7:30-9:00 am CST (recorded)

Anonymity: Gateway to Recovery, Pathway to Spirituality

I am a compulsive overeater, who has found recovery in the rooms of OA for many years and am so grateful I found and got help applying abstinence, the 12 Step Solution and anonymity to my program and personal life.

When I arrived at my first OA meeting, more than 100 pounds overweight, I was anxious, fearful and ashamed of myself and my eating habits. But this all changed as the meeting progressed.

A person spoke on the tool of anonymity, explaining that anything said at this meeting is to be kept in strict confidence and not shared with anyone, that there should be no gossiping between us, and that we do not discuss other members and their stories within or without the rooms of OA.

The tool of anonymity was my personal gateway to recovery. It allowed me to feel safe and secure at OA meetings so I could ask questions, share, talk to my fellows in person and on the phone, tell my story and pitch on a tool. It allowed me to be real and open about my sordid past, what I did with food (like eat out of the garbage) and the defects that were still active in my life. I never had to worry about people talking about me or putting me down. In OA I am on an equal basis with every other person. We are all just trusted servants to each other.

It allowed me to do a full inventory of myself and say it out loud to another person with complete trust that what I said would not be repeated. Telling all my secrets released piles of guilt and added tons relief. This could have never happened without the tool, step, tradition and principle of anonymity.

The principle of anonymity has also been my pathway to spirituality because it helped me place principles before personalities and to practice genuine humility and stop worrying about what others think, release competitiveness, status seeking and grandiosity. First I became “a worker among workers,” “one among many” in OA and then in my personal life. Anonymity allowed me to focus on me and not try to rule or control anyone or anything besides myself. I now make choices on principles and facts and not personalities and that keeps me peaceful and happy most of the time.

~ Gratefully Anonymous

Note: The following article was written for the March issue on Step Three.

Thoughts from an (Abstinent) Food Addict

In my first encounter with the Twelve-step program, Step Three seemed both irrational and impossible. It was in rehab for alcoholism, but that doesn't matter. I had disposed of God a long time ago, as an ancient myth that some people subscribed to because they couldn't stand the idea that death was the end, and no one was minding the shop. But those people had found something that managed to save them from their addiction to drugs, and most of them called it God. That whatever- it-is eliminated not only my craving for alcohol, but for tobacco as well: it was just another drug.

Midway through rehab I had a spiritual experience, and after that I knew I had higher power. I didn't know what it was, but that didn't matter. I have not had a drop of either forbidden chemical since that time. However, my addiction traveled to my stomach. Before I smoked, drank and chased women, I ate.

In 1993, after reaching 200 pounds, I was ready. I went back on my diet – my last yoyo diet, as it turned out – and white-knuckled it for a month before finally joining OA because I couldn't stand it anymore and was afraid that I'd relapse.

I have been abstinent ever since. The same power that saved me from drugs made my eating manageable. It was never easy, and sometimes it is still hard. As a friend of mine once said, abstinence is like taking the dragon out for a walk three times a day. I am constantly battling to keep the calories down and get enough of the proper nutrients so I can go on running and enjoying how I look. Now, even though I am older than dirt, I still don't understand that higher power, but that doesn't matter either: it works. I'll settle.

Here are some thoughts that this old food addict has picked up over the years:

- ~ I'm here because instant gratification was too slow and too much was not enough.
- ~ I am powerless over everything but what I do in the next minute. Fortunately, this includes everything I put into my mouth and whatever comes out of it.
- ~ Eat like a rabbit and make love like an elephant, not the other way around.
- ~ I knew how to eat; I just couldn't eat how I knew.
- ~ Craving is an on-off switch in my mind. Something with more power than I turned it off, but I can turn it back on all by myself.
- ~ Food is fuel, not a substitute for reality.

Good luck on your own life's journey. Mine includes the Minnehaha Monday group.*

**On hold due to COVID-19*

~ Anonymous