



May 2020

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

EVENTS

[Virtual Workshop](#)

[12-Stepping Through COVID-19](#)

May 9th, 9 am–12 pm
(registration required)

[Big Book Study Webinar](#)

May 30 & June 6
9:00 am–5:30 pm

[Region 4 Convention](#)

Omaha, NE, July 10–12

Looking for speakers!

Contact Annette: 763-447-3215

INTERGROUP

Meeting will take place on Zoom

May 9th, 12:30–2:00 pm

Details to follow

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Seeking 2 abstinent OA
members to serve as

Region 4 Representatives

Contact Annette: 763-447-3215

aryan52@comcast.net

LOW COST, HIGH VALUE!

Download 2019 Unity Intergroup

[Convention speaker recordings](#)

for just \$5.00

NEW LITERATURE!

[12 Step Workshop and](#)

[Participant Guide, 2nd Edition](#)

Pairs with *OA 12 Steps & 12 Traditions, 2nd Ed.*

Our topic this month is:

“How faith and spirituality enhance your recovery”

We invite you to contribute articles for our upcoming issues!

June: *“Staying abstinent through tough times and trauma”*

July: *“Thoughts on one of the Just for Today resolutions”*

August: *“Tips for traveling and vacationing abstinely”*

Please send submissions to:

ExpressionsofUnity2020@gmail.com

PHONE & ONLINE MEETING RESOURCES

[Unity Intergroup Phone & Online Meetings](#)

[OA Phone Meetings](#)

[OA-HOW Phone Meetings](#)

[OA Speaker Recordings](#)

“A Vision For You” Big Book Phone Meetings

Ph: 712-432-5210, Code: 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)

UNITY INTERGROUP BOARD

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WORDS MATTER

I walked into the rooms of OA at rock bottom, *mangled emotionally, physically and spiritually*. The depression that accompanied 160 unwanted pounds on my body was so severe that I was willing to do ANYTHING to get relief. I was even willing to ask God for help. This felt a bit false at the time, because I don't believe in "God." But my simple prayer, "God, save me from myself," was the starting point in my recovery.

Being gifted with back-to-back abstinence was a road to a freedom I never thought possible. But I stayed low on the radar for all those discussions of what God was doing for me. My Higher Power was my OA group, and my interactions with them through our frequent phone calls was the closest thing to prayer I knew.

I had struggled with my beliefs in a power greater than myself throughout my adult life. At one point, I saw the ocean as God—I could float in its vastness and never get too heavy for it. But I surely didn't know how to pray to the ocean, so my development of a relationship with that higher power didn't get much mileage.

I experienced overwhelming physical and emotional recovery—losing all the excess weight and experiencing a huge lift in my mood. I invested some effort in working to sit still long enough to call the period of sitting meditation. But I couldn't pray. How could I, when I couldn't name someone or something to pray to? Did it really matter? No. I was abstinent, active in service, and working the 12 Steps (well, Step 11 didn't exactly get the same energy as the other 11.)

But something happened. The freedom that I had experienced for over 12 years morphed into a belief that *I* had managed to accomplish this recovery and no longer needed the structure of the steps and tools. After all, I hadn't had a compulsive bite in 12.5 years. I could now just go on my merry way.

It took 2.5 years to acknowledge that I was in relapse. It was time to come back to the source that had delivered me from this devastating addiction. When I returned, I dove into the literature, quickly realizing that my failure to remain spiritually fit was the real source of my demise. And I decided I had better get serious about developing a faith that works for me. How could I start every day with the prayer, "Thy will, not mine, be done," and not know "Thy"? I gave up my instinctual tendency toward defiance just long enough to investigate the principles that inform many of my best decisions. I settled on five key words: Truth, Beauty, Love, Justice and Compassion. Each of these words invites me to step into a world of honesty, a world of service, a world of gratitude, and a world of equality. I can truly *pray* to these concepts.

Truth. Show me who I am today, so I can authentically connect with all around me.

Beauty. Open my eyes to all that is good and help me appreciate the many blessings I have.

Love. Keep me centered in the reality that I am loved and all those I meet deserve to be loved.

Justice. Give me courage to speak truth to power and create opportunities for equality.

Compassion. Open my heart to all I meet, replacing judgment with understanding.

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May my pride find humility, my envy display kindness, my procrastination convert to energetic discipline, and my wrath dissolve into patience. Stay close to me as I approach whatever challenge next confronts me. Taking time to find words that work for me has connected me to a power greater than myself and given me a sense of spiritual health that had been missing for years.

~ Peg

THE DIFFERENCE TODAY

Before really working the Steps, I thought I could take what I want (weight loss) and leave the rest (spirituality). But instead I learned that finding spirituality through the Fellowship and the Steps gave me what I truly wanted: honest connection with my Spirit, myself and other people. And the bonus was that weight loss and freedom from food obsession came as part of the bargain! What I want to write here, because it's true, is that spirituality does not *enhance* my program; rather it's the *beginning and ending* of my program, one day at a time.

When I started really committing to working the OA program, I didn't begin with spirituality. I began with a measured and committed food plan. By putting down the food, with much help from the fellowship, a space was cleared to find spirituality. I had never belonged to an organized religion and thought I would have to make myself believe in someone else's God to do this program. But nothing was further from the truth. Today I follow my own sense of Spirit which is freeing and guiding at the same time. I connect with this Spirit in the morning and ask for help staying in conscious contact throughout the day.

Nowadays when I feel scared or confused, when I can't find my sense of direction and I don't know what to do next, I know what to say: "Spirit, grant me the serenity." I say it multiple times to help focus and still my mind to receive the answer. Sometimes clarity comes; other times my questions remain but I know that I'll be OK, no matter what. My Spirit is ever present, always there for me. I don't berate myself when I forget and practice my old 2-Step program: 1) I got this, and 2) I don't need any help.

The difference today is that I now have a set of 12 Steps that provide the spirituality I never realized I'd always wanted. The difference today is that I continue to take steps on that spiritual journey.

~Anonymous

STAYING SANE WHILE #STAYINGHOME

Since the stay-at-home order, I've developed a daily morning routine of quiet time, meditation, and reading from the literature. Before, I might skip a day or two, but I've come to really depend on this new routine. ~ B

MY FIVE-YEAR JOURNEY FROM LESS TO MORE

Five years ago, I found better way to live. What have the last five years looked like for me? The list is endless, but since 12 seems to be such a fitting number, here's my "Top 12" list:

1. More "we" and less "me."
2. More acceptance and less perfectionism.
3. More gratitude and less fear.
4. More living and less existing.
5. More craving connection and less craving binge foods.
6. More laughter and less despair.
7. More self-esteem and less unworthiness.
8. More free time and less isolation.
9. More creator and less self.
10. More insight for step work and less playing the victim card.
11. More respect at work and less fear of being fired.
12. More seasons of wearing the same clothes and less time and money spent buying different sizes.

I'm so grateful for all the "mores" recovery has given me. How about you—what's on your list?

~ Anonymous

A DEEP AND DAILY CONNECTION TO GOD

My spirituality is very grounded in my belief in my Higher Power (God). I feel a deep connection to God daily, which I develop through prayer, spiritual music, and finding quiet space in my day to open myself up to Him.

What is my evidence of the fruit of this spirituality in my program? Well, in the promises of the program, one of them is "we will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us." That intuition is from God. It is a quiet, sometimes indescribable, peace of mind that I can sense. An intuition I interpret as quiet guidance. Since I know I am deeply connected to God, I can trust this guidance—with my abstinent food plan, with decisions I make with work and family, with the steps in my program.

This spirituality within my program also reminds me that I am not alone. I always have an opportunity to ask my Higher Power "What would you have me say? What would you have me see? What would you have me do?" Answers to those questions come through my connection with God, and they guide me daily.

~ Anonymous

THE MIRACLE OF GOD WORKING IN MY LIFE

God has always been with me, and He has truly worked miracles in my life. After suffering from years of compulsive overeating and sugar addiction, God brought me to OA in February of 2010. I finally saw that I was powerless, and I needed help. I walked into an OA meeting where I was encouraged to read *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "The Big Book," as we lovingly refer to it. I started by reading "Bill's Story." As the daughter of an alcoholic, I wept because I saw so clearly, for the first time in my life, how what I was doing with food was EXACTLY the same thing my dad did with alcohol. And from that moment on, my compulsion to binge was lifted. God removed it from me. I have not had a binge or picked up sugar in over 10 years.

Let me be clear: I absolutely believe 100% that this was a spiritual awakening, a miracle God worked in my life. If I could have done it on my own, surely I would have. Only God could relieve me of my compulsion to overeat. No human power could do this for me. God has done for me what I could never do alone!

It would be tempting to "rest on my laurels." Yet, if I want to continue to live in freedom, peace, and happiness, I must cultivate my relationship with God every day. To do this, I have to make certain sacrifices and take specific actions:

- 1) I must wake up extra early and devote time to God. For me, this usually looks like a morning 10th Step where I focus on any resentments I feel and celebrate the many gratitudes I have! I call my sponsor every morning, and I often hear the voice of God's Holy Spirit through her loving guidance.
- 2) I must surrender control of my husband and allow him to have a voice. When I let go of control and truly listen, God often speaks through him as well! Letting go of control of my husband also helps me focus on his gifts and feel tremendous gratitude for him. As an added benefit, when I surrender control, our marriage is transformed.
- 3) I must pray without ceasing, thanking God for the precious gift of recovery, my husband, my children, our home, and this incredible life He has given me! I must ask for His wisdom and discernment, specifically asking Him to help me pause, pray, and THEN proceed with any action that needs to be taken. My words and actions are always kinder after a dose of prayer.
- 4) I must set boundaries with people that simply are not capable of loving and supporting me in the way I need. I must be loving and kind while speaking my truth with a strong voice. I can choose whom I spend my time with and limit my exposure to certain people, if needed.
- 5) I must utilize self-care and give myself a "time-out" if I am feeling angry, irritable, or frustrated. Taking a nature walk, going for a jog or a bike ride, calling an OA friend or other supportive person helps me get re-centered in God's will, not mine.

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God has given me a life beyond my wildest dreams. As a result of OA and my relationship with God, most days I live life with “a new freedom and a new happiness”! Life is hard. The kids drive me crazy. But food is never the answer. Love is the answer. Today, I choose to live in joy and gratitude. God’s love is greater than any of the challenges I face. I must continue, every day, to seek His will in all areas of my life. God has never let me down and I know He will continue to walk with me every 12 Steps of the way!

~ Caitlin L., Bloomington, MN

BETWEEN MY HIGHER POWER AND ME

For someone who came into the program realizing that I needed to act as if I believed in a power greater than myself, I am relieved to have been shown the way. Even in trying to figure out what my HP is, I have had let it go to accept what it is. For me, spirituality is tied to meetings, 12-Step relationships, and my spiritual experiences.

I believe I have become a more aware person—to myself and my behaviors, to others and my reactions to them, and to the world. I work with what I can control, which is what happens between my Higher Power and me. When my relationship with my Higher Power is strong, my abstinence comes easily, I experience gratitude, and my heart is full of joy. When I struggle, I know right away what is lacking and I dig deeper to connect. Thank you, God, for the goodness in my life.

~ Anonymous

STAYING SANE WHILE #STAYINGHOME More quotes from OA members

Being unemployed or temporarily laid off can seem overwhelming and can put my panic and ‘what if’ scenarios into hyper-drive. To avoid this, I like to break down my ‘one day at a time’ into even smaller segments. I make a plan in my head for what I’m doing this morning, this afternoon and this evening. Sometimes I even just try to focus on what I’m doing for the next hour. Totally focused and not worrying about things outside of that time frame. ~ L

I’ve had lots of freedom from weighing and measuring how I spend my time which keeps things in balance. For every 15–30 minutes of reality (watching the news or reading), I spend twice that much time enjoying recovery and spiritual work (phone or Zoom meetings, calls with fellows, podcasts, webinars). ~ K

I find I’m moving more slowly through my days and being more mindful about where my hands are. Before, my calendar was always full, and I think I retreated into busyness to avoid my feelings. I hope I can hang onto this new way of being even after the pace of life picks up. ~ S