



August 2021

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

News and Note Worthy

The Intergroup Meeting Has A Speaker!!

Did you know that the Intergroup has a recovery speaker at the beginning of every meeting? Please join us for some recovery and stay for a bit of the Intergroup meeting.

Everyone is welcome!

Saturday, August 14

12:30–2:30 pm on [Zoom](#)

ID 810 4426 4132 / PW 12345

Celebrating Sponsorship Workshop

Registration is now open!

Saturday, August 21

9:30am to 2pm

More info on page 2

Tuesday OA/How meeting will be back face to face!

Starting September 7th

9:30 to 11:30 am

Bethel Evangelical

Lutheran Church

4120-17th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55407

See page 5 for more info or
call Dawn S. at 612-310-1703

A New Quick Steps Workshop

Saturday, September 18 &

Saturday, October 2

9:00am to 12:30pm

More info on page 6

The Option for Deeper Healing is Always There

A beautiful aspect of this program is putting things down in black and white on paper. I ate it or I didn't. I nibbled or I didn't. I did my intention, or I didn't. Making a list is specific and I no longer have to hold the issue or the feelings inside of me. When I make a list of the people I have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all in Step 8, I am acknowledging that I have done harm and I am in the process of summoning a new way of being. A quality of humility that can let go of the part of myself that has done this harm. And in so doing, I reduce the damage to myself and open a door to happiness inside me and with others.

Most recently, my Step 8 work is in the form of living amends. If I have chronic thoughts about someone being arrogant, guess who the most arrogant one in the room is? Me! Step 8 is a reflection now of who I am being. I get to let go of my thoughts about that person, surrender, and pursue a more beautiful, happier path.

How about when it is real? When I have truly harmed someone? I get to explore deeply and humbly what I have done, craft the words, and be willing to nakedly share them either in person or writing.

I have come to appreciate that there is a rhythm to healing and it is never done. I have spent years wondering why my healing isn't finished. Now I know the cycle is eternal, and the option of deeper healing is always there. And it keeps getting better.

Kate B.



Celebrate Sponsorship

Saturday, August 21st is Sponsorship Day.

9:30a.m. to 2:00p.m.

Valley Community Presbyterian Church
3100 Lilac Drive N, Golden Valley, MN 55422

Let's celebrate by being together again!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Speakers from OA HOW, traditional OA, and OA in Action
- Sponsorship *speed dating*
- Introduction to resources useful in sponsorship

BYOL—Bring your own lunch

REGISTRATION—Hybrid event...attend in-person or via Zoom!

- Online registration: <http://overeaters.org/upcomingevents>
- Mailed Registration: Print this form and enclose a check payable to *Unity Intergroup*, (postmarked by August 14th) and mail to:

Unity Intergroup – Sponsorship Day
5115 Excelsior Blvd. Box 325, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

QUESTIONS—contact Annette P-R, aprlovesoa@gmail.com, ph.(763)447-5688

In person registrations are limited to 30 due to Covid19. More spaces may open up in the future.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

I will be attending: (check one) _____ Online Zoom Meeting _____ In person

Email (required to receive meeting login) _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Please contact me for service opportunities. Y / N

Workshop \$10.00 #of Persons attending _____ Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

“Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”

This Step scared me big time. My pattern was to hide my food binges. I pretended this behavior was not happening, especially when it involved stealing my roommate's food, searching in my co-worker desks for candy, and eating food that did not belong to me. I was afraid to do this Step because I would have to go “public”, meaning I would need to talk about the food I had taken from my roommates, co-workers, family, and friends. I had been very secretive about taking food. I thought no one would miss any food if I took “small” amounts from numerous bags or containers of sweets, candy, and cakes. Small always turned into big amounts though. I had much shame about my food behaviors.

The other problem I had with Step 8 - I was convinced that I had done no harm and that I was a victim. There were always extenuating circumstances that made me want to overeat! At the same time, I was living in the turmoil of that “quiet desperation.” The turmoil of my eating days caused physical suffering - the terrible food hangovers, bloating, and headaches. However, it was the mental suffering - the loneliness, the feeling of inferiority, the lying, and the remorse - that became the heavier burden.

The Overeaters Anonymous 12 Step Program does not say that I can pick and choose which Steps feel right or which Steps I want to do. Nope, this is NOT how it works. I may be uncomfortable and want to skip a Step or two. However, this program was designed to help me change, move from the past shadows of shame, and walk with joy and peace. If I was to move beyond the days of binging and hiding food, then I must be willing to work all the 12 Steps, including Step 8 followed by Step 9.

Big pause. Step 8 is only about getting ready and for today just making the list. I do not have to worry about talking to others for today. My sponsor recommended that I make three columns for amends: Group 1- those that I am willing to make amends to, Group 2 - those that I may consider making amends to, and Group 3 - no way in hell am I going to make amends to. Then I pray for God's guidance and *to be willing, to be willing, to be willing* to do the next right action.

This is a program of transformation. Each of the Steps helps me find myself and clean up the past. The promises of the Big Book are listed after Step 9. The promises were what I have wanted all my life: “We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it ... fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.” These are powerful words and the promises have come true for everyone who is willing to make changes. I wanted the promises, and I became willing to make amends to all three groups. God did for me what I could not do for myself.

Gwen G.

R

egarding

R

elapse ...

Welcome to 'Regarding Relapse' – a monthly column on the topic of relapse. We will be sharing tools, thoughts on relapse, personal stories on recovery from relapse – and more! This month in honor of *Sponsorship Day* (August 21 – 22), we will focus on sponsorship.

Sponsorship is very important tool. For those in relapse, it is especially important that we have a sponsor to guide the sponsee, via the sponsor's own recovery, back into recovery. Sponsors can also guide sponsees in the use of our nine tools of recovery.

There are many ways to sponsor and many things one can learn about sponsorship. Therefore, Unity Intergroup is hosting a sponsorship workshop on August 21st. For more information about the workshop go to: [Upcoming Overeaters Anonymous Events – Find an Event](#) and scroll down to *Sponsorship Workshop*.

We will be highlighting resources available to sponsors and sponsees. Below are some of those resources in case you wish to check them out.

Downloadable Items

- From-Slip-or-Relapse-to-Recovery.pdf
- Been-Slipping-and Sliding.pdf
- Strongabstinencechecklist.pdf
- Temporary Sponsors: Newcomers' First Twelve Days – Overeaters Anonymous (oa.org). (This resource is useful to sponsorship in general but is geared towards the newcomer.)

Books (Focus on working the Twelve Steps)

- Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide 2nd Edition
Participant Guide for above
- Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous 2nd Edition.

Pamphlets

- Where Do I Start? (This resource is useful to sponsorship in general but is geared towards the newcomer.)
- Dignity of Choice
- A Plan of Eating

Sponsorship Kit – a packet of inspiring and helpful information for sponsors which includes:

- The Tool of Recovery #160
- A Guide for Sponsors #200
- Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps #220
- Excerpts from Lifeline magazine featuring stories about sponsorship.
- Strong Abstinence Checklist and Writing Exercise wallet card #415.
- Twelve Stepping a Problem wallet card #420
- Abstinence-literature-resource-gude.pdf (oa.org)

You can find many other resources useful to sponsorship on oa.org such as podcasts and “*Breaking Out of Relapse*” video.

AnonymoUs

Recovery from Relapse meeting information:

Thursdays 6pm Central – Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87100236034?pwd=d3ZsYThSTDViYm1JWIk0RWkLWE9Kdz09>

Meeting ID: 871 0023 6034 Passcode: 93D9ie

Or call 312-626-6799 Same ID Passcode: 546650

For more info contact Annette 763-447-5688

email aprlovesoa@gmail.com

Tuesday OA/HOW

The Tuesday OA/HOW meeting will be going back to in-person, face to face meeting, starting September 7th. The church’s COVID policy is vaccinated people do not have to wear masks unless there are unvaccinated children around, then everyone needs to wear a mask. Unvaccinated people as asked to wear a mask.

**Tuesday OA/How Meeting
9:30-11:30am
Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
4120- 17th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407**

Please contact Dawn S. at 612-310-1703 if there are any questions



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 18, 2021
and Saturday, October 2, 2021
Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm (CDT)**

Location

These sessions will be on Zoom.

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

To register, contact unityquicksteps@gmail.com.

Registration is required as **class size is limited**. The zoom link will be sent to registrants

You will need to have a sponsor or someone who can listen to your 5th Step.

There are no fees for this workshop, but we encourage a 7th Tradition donation to Unity Intergroup.

Time commitment is two Saturday sessions, plus homework. We expect participants to attend both sessions. ***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.

Self-Forgiveness

I'm 63 years old and have finally found a lovely recovery that exists very much like oxygen in my life – natural, accessible, and so it turns out absolutely essential. I don't question this third one anymore – essential. I did for a lot of years and because of this, I lost a lot of decades to this disease of compulsive eating.

My life has been deeply beautiful in so many ways, I have a steadfast and loving husband of 40 years and we have two daughters, both amazingly smart, independent, creative, loving young women. I've had many opportunities with my master's degree in education administration, I've spent most of my career doing meaningful work within higher education and the nonprofit world. And I'm profoundly grateful for all that I've been given.

And usually this is pretty much all I'll choose to share about myself. But the truth is, I've also missed so much of my life, so much of who I am, of who I might have been, and perhaps who I was meant to be. Truthfully, I'm not especially looking forward to writing about this because as a compulsive eater since early childhood, I have missed all of this to such a degree that here at 63, this hole still exists within me. This empty place where in a life well lived, a life lived free of addiction, would have unfolded inside of me, would have been fleshed out with memories and nuances and growth with failures, successes born of taking unknown roads and untold chances – chances I didn't take not because I didn't consider them, but because they never so much as surfaced.

Perhaps it's true for all of us humans that few lives are lived to their utmost fullest. Perhaps for most of us, we are fortunate to fulfill much, though not all, of our lives' potential. But when it comes to a life consumed by addictive patterns and addictive behaviors, a truth I don't like to face is that I cannot recapture the fullness of the life that I could have lived. I would have lived had it not been for 50+ years of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Thus, I may never fully be, whoever it is I might have been, if I could have grown each day of my 63 years in the sunlight of the spirit.

Hmmm...As we come through the work of Steps 8 and 9, the Big Book offers us the ninth Step promises on page 84 and 85. Among these are the promises is we will "not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it." Where does this leave me? In recovery for three years, I realize that I am

only now understanding this internal ache for what it is. In addition to the teachings of the Big Book, I am also grateful for the wisdom within our OA literature.

The OA 12x12's chapter on Step 8 speaks knowingly to the very place I find myself. In reading this chapter, I am reminded, as so often happens in OA, that I am not alone. Working the Steps has brought me a lasting and deepening recovery, one that is now teaching me that I need to forgive myself for all the long years I lost to addiction. Page 58 states, "Many of us found that our own name belongs somewhere near that top of our Eighth Step list. Yes, we have harmed others, but we have also damaged ourselves with our self-destructive thinking, eating and living habits. We have learned that a complete willingness to make amends to ourselves and to forgive ourselves for past mistakes has been essential to our recovery." And page 59 adds, "We need to forgive ourselves for what we regret doing or not doing and for not being all we could have been. Self-forgiveness means letting go of negative feelings, such as shame and guilt. The power to extend forgiveness to others comes from self-forgiveness."

And lest we might ignore Step Eight's teachings, page 61 cautions, "As much as we might like to, we cannot skip the making of amends if we want freedom from compulsive eating. The experience of OA members who have worked the Steps before us shows that recovery depends on completing Steps Eight and Nine."

Today I am reminded that sometimes, maybe always, this process of amends includes a very real amends to ourselves. This includes being honest with ourselves and forgiving ourselves. From this new-found footing, I am forging a new path forward, creating a new design for living. No longer alone but in community with our Higher Power and with our fellows as we heal and grow into the people the Universe intends us to be.

I am 63 and now in recovery, free of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors, I am very much alive, and I am becoming my whole self, on day at a time, one foot in front of the other. The self-honesty and self-forgiveness offered us in Step Eight have proven to be key ingredients in this healing process. Lighting a path forward toward my true and best self, and for this I am grateful indeed.

Shelley D.

After Years of Running

In the Step 4 chapter of the OA 12 x 12, it is suggested that we identify our shortcomings as we go. In Step 5 we admit the nature of our wrongs, promptly admitted them to our Higher Power, to another human being, and to ourselves. In Step 6 we became entirely ready to turn all these defects of character over to God. In Step 7 we humbly ask our Higher Power to remove all our defects of character.

Now we are on Step 8. In Step 8 we make a list of all the persons we have harmed, and we become entirely ready to make amends to them all. The Big Book doesn't discuss Step 8 except as it relates to Step 9, and in just two sentences. The OA 12 x 12, however, has lots of good guidance.

With one exception, I've done Step 8 at least 3 times. The exception was the three sentences on page 59 of the OA 12 x 12 that I never saw until now! Page 59 reads, "After years of running from any kind of unpleasantness and hiding ourselves in food so we wouldn't have to feel embarrassment or pain, we're now asked to admit our mistakes and face all their consequences. We're asked to do so while being abstinent, without eating compulsively to numb our feelings." After reading about abstinence, I remember how good I felt while being abstinent. I began my abstinence again, knowing that I feel much closer to my Higher Power when I am.

Now I'll discuss more of Step 8. The OA 12 x 12 breaks this Step into two parts. Part 1. Write a list of all the persons we have harmed. Step 4 is the starting point here. Part 2. Become willing to make amends to those on our list.

Part 1. Recommends praying to our Higher Power for wisdom and for help us to be thorough while writing down the people we had harmed, from the beginning. As we made this list of people and the harms we had done to them, our purpose in listing them isn't to judge others, but to learn attitudes of forgiveness to those we had harmed. We list, not just the people from Step 4, but also the other people that come up while doing the list. Often, we should add ourselves to the list because we have damaged ourselves with destructive thinking, eating, and living behaviors.

Sometimes the list includes people that don't belong there. If we have not harmed them, but we have been harmed by them, then the answer is to learn to forgive them. I will discuss forgiveness further in part 2 of this Step.

Part 2. We can't be afraid and humiliated to make amends to those on the list. Whether we face someone in person if appropriate, or by some other means, we know that we were wrong in our thoughts and actions. But actually making the amends may seem impossible.

After years of not facing ourselves and our actions against others by using food and other substances, all 12 Step programs expect us to obtain the moral courage to face ourselves, our Higher Power, and another person. We have to face and feel our emotions in an appropriate way, using abstinence, our sponsor, our Higher Power, and the tools of this program. This is my understanding after years in two 12 Step programs and observing a third.

Our sponsors can help us to use forgiveness of ourselves and others. Forgiveness is an essential part of Step 8. Self-forgiveness means we need to forgive ourselves for doing and not doing things, as well as not living up to our true potential. Here we let go of both shame and guilt. If we don't, we continue to hurt ourselves.

What is forgiveness? The OA 12 x 12 states, "Forgiveness is not excusing. A wrong was, in fact, committed. Forgiveness is not giving permission for the hurtful behavior to continue or saying the behavior from the past is okay. It's not necessarily reconciliation. That's a separate decision."

The step to forgiving others is writing down everything that you're mad about. Then read it to someone else like your sponsor or wait and read it to yourself later. This should make you feel better and less angry. We may want to burn it or rip it up for closure.

If these Steps don't work, the OA 12 x 12 suggests praying for each person and asking our Higher Power for specific good things to happen to each one, including our Higher Power's blessing on them. We'll know we have freely forgiven each person when we want to pray for good things for them. Now we're ready for Step 9. With this I'll pass.

Rondi W.