



February 2022

# Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup  
www.overeaters.org

## News and Noteworthy

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### The Unity Intergroup Bylaws have been amended.

Please review the changes online. There will be vote on the changes on Saturday, February 12 at the Intergroup meeting.

Go to [overeaters.org](http://overeaters.org).

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### Registration is open for the 2022 Buffalo Retreat!

Friday, April 8 to Sunday, April 10.

At Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN. More info on page 8.

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### Relapse Recovery Meeting

Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm CT

Zoom ID: 871 0023 6034

Passcode: 93D9ie or

Call 312-626-6799, Same ID, Passcode: 546650

See page 4 for more info or contact Annette:

[aprlovesoa@gmail.com](mailto:aprlovesoa@gmail.com)

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## Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

I came to believe by acting as if there was a power that could restore me to sanity. I didn't know who or what that power was, but I believed that it was possible that this Higher Power could work that magic. I was unsure of my beliefs when I came into OA but based on the fact that I needed this power to work the steps I had to act as if I already had the belief. The results were undeniable. These 'acting as if' experiments grew my faith in this yet undefinable Higher Power. Over time my faith grew, and I came to understand that 'God' is in charge and if I let him (her, it?), things work out better. Each day I have the opportunity to connect my spiritual train car to my Higher Power. And when I do, I have a much better day than if I hadn't.

## Tradition Two: "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."

Coming to believe that my HP could restore me to sanity and trusting that Power is one thing. But trusting that same Higher Power in a group setting called for another level of faith – faith that my Higher Power would guide the group conscience as well. I am a person who tends to fall in love with my own ideas, so honoring the group conscience when they didn't get the 'right answer' takes some effort. A little part of me wants to argue for my position. But the fact of the matter is that I value the good of the group more than being right. So, I settle my little inner child down, trust that my Higher Power has it right, and accept the outcome of the vote.

## APR – Crystal Wednesday Afternoon OA

## AM I “JUSTING”?

Years ago, I attended a wilderness survival workshop, where I learned that the three most dangerous words in our vocabulary are, “I’M JUST GONNA”. Now, in the dictionary, one of the definitions for the word JUST is this, “barely, by a very small margin.” So, in regards to wilderness survival, one might say, “Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I don’t wear my life jacket while paddling in high winds,” or “Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I walk that sharp rocky shore in my bare feet.”

Similar to being in a boat without a life jacket, I am learning to be aware that when I use the word JUST in regard to my Program, it puts me on shaky ground, as it usually indicates that I am about to shortcut a tried-and-true system:

Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I take that first bite.  
Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I take a second helping.  
Barely, by a very small margin, I might, be okay if I don’t get a sponsor.  
Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I don’t talk to my sponsor.  
Barely, by a very small margin, I might be okay if I try to work this program by myself.

Why would I do this? Because I am a compulsive overeater with other addictions, and I want the easier, softer, way. I don’t want to work too hard. But mostly, I want a change without making any changes. That’s why the word JUST is so attractive: it implies that I can do a tiny bit of this Program, or cherry-pick the parts that I like, and get the benefits without doing the work.

It doesn’t work that way. Our Program is very simple, and positive, as it tells me what TO DO:

DO stick to your food plan.  
DO eat measured portions.  
DO get a sponsor.  
DO talk to your sponsor.  
DO find a way to have a Higher Power, admit that you’re powerless, and live your life according to your Higher Power’s guidance.

So, the next time I hear myself say, “I’m JUST gonna”, I have to ask myself if I am trying to get out of doing something, looking for an easier/softer way, or trying to do MY will instead of my Higher Power’s will.

Try it. It works.

Sheri M. Crystal OA

## Thank you Unity Intergroup

Hi, I'm Lori a compulsive overeater. I want to thank Unity Intergroup for allowing me to be Intergroup Chair this past year, and I also want to thank my sponsor for the great example of service she showed me. Thanks to ZOOM, I was able to step into this role without being in the metro area. To all who served on the Unity Intergroup Board with me, the Intergroup Representatives, and others who did service of any kind, you made my job a joy. You all deserve a round of applause and then some. What a great bunch you all are! Thank you for giving me a service opportunity beyond my local group level.

Being Unity Intergroup Chair has really been an awesome experience, I would like for others to have that experience as well. Rotation of leadership is an important aspect of our recovery, plus making a commitment to doing service is extending a hand out as our responsibility pledge states. I am so glad when I reached out, there was a hand for me to grab. I shudder to think where I would be today if there hadn't been a hand to grab when I reached out.

As a nurse I know how important breathing is for a patient. No breath, no life. Pretty simple. We not only breathe in, but we must breathe out. When I first came to OA all I did was take in. That wasn't healthy and I spent many years in relapse. I did not understand the importance of giving back what I was so generously given, because it was all about me. I was very selfish and self-centered. Somewhere along the way, I got out of myself and not only took a breath in, but also out. Some of those memories include opening up and sharing, not just sitting and listening and then asking for a sponsor. Other memories include chairing my first meeting, as well as giving rides to meetings, being the contact person for the group, then treasurer, and then working with others by being a sponsor. I started attending outside events like the OA Buffalo Retreat back in 1996 (this year is April 8-10) and then the Minnesota State Convention. Definitely some fond memories! Now I can add being Unity Intergroup Chair for this past year and all the wonderful people I had the honor of getting to know and work with.

So, you see, if I can do it, you can too. What's holding you back? Don't you want to give back so the still suffering compulsive overeater can find a hand reaching out that they can grab on to. The OA responsibility pledge states, "Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible." My heart became involved when I got out of myself.

Going back to my being a nurse –breathing isn't the only important thing we are taught in the ABCs. Besides airway and breathing, there is also circulation. I had to make the journey from my head to my heart. February is the month of love and the heart. Gratitude is love in action. Are you ready to take some action??? Come join us at Unity Intergroup! We would love to have an Intergroup Representative from every group attend Unity Intergroup meeting, which is held on the second Saturday of each month from 12:30-to 2:30pm. We have a 20-minute speaker at the beginning of each meeting and then we go into the business of the Intergroup. Please check with your group to see if there is a representative. Maybe it could be you. Hope to see you at the next Intergroup meeting on Saturday, February 12.

Lori K

Marshfield, WI Sunday 6-7pm ZOOM 666-709-3882 code 977264

And Crystal Wed 1-2:30pm ZOOM 852-5851-5124 code 183246

# Regarding Relapse ...

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 we will focus on a topic.

**Let's talk about shame.** I was speaking to a member of the Thursday 6pm Recovery from Relapse meeting who stated that she was struggling and didn't want to come to meetings until she was doing better. In other words, she was dealing with shame. This broke my heart that someone didn't think they were good enough to attend a meeting about dealing with relapse. I totally get it. I have done similar things such as calling my sponsor after I'd been overeating to report that 'I'm better now.' But let's each remind ourselves of something contained in *Our Invitation to You* found on page 4 in *Overeaters Anonymous 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*.

"The amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other and to a Higher Power and somehow gives us the ability to do what we cannot do alone. We have discovered that if people in this program love us, it is not for our strength, but our weakness and our willingness to share that with others."

The message here is that we need each other – even if you are struggling. I need to hear your struggles, so I don't forget that I am a compulsive overeater. And I need to share my story with you so that I remember why I am doing this and to offer you hope. In sharing your struggles, you reach a new level of honesty that may just restart your recovery. I can be a witness to you.

And let's face it. Don't we each feel better when we discover that others are feeling as we do or as we once did. If a member in relapse shares their struggles, it gives recovering member the opportunity to let them know they are not alone – we have felt that way too. Each time I share with a sponsee that I remember dealing with what they are dealing with, my sponsee breathes a sigh of relief – knowing that I understand.

Anonymous

***Recovery from Relapse*** meeting information:

Thursdays 6pm Central – Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87100236034?pwd=d3ZsYThSTDViYm1JWlk0RWWhLWE9Kdz09>

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](mailto:aprlovesoa@gmail.com)

## Six Ways My Disease Shows Up

Here are some ways that my disease manifests itself, and how I try to let God show me the path to recovery –

1. Preoccupation with how much food I get in a restaurant compared to someone else's plate. Did someone give me a spoonful or less of something? Is her salad bigger? Is her fish bigger? It doesn't matter what it is. I have a fear of other people getting more than me.

This is about fear and insecurity. Someone else is always getting more than me. When I make several calls and my friends are busy, it must be they don't want to be with me. I can sink into self-pity and negative judgment about how insignificant I am to others. These are examples of preoccupation with self, with my ego. They are examples of grandiosity. Why aren't people available to me any time I call them? Why don't they appreciate what a wonderful time they will have with me because I'm so much fun and I'm such a good listener, and I'm such a wonderful person? The only remedy for this is humility. I am no better or worse than anyone. I am enough, and I get enough. God is in charge of my life, not me.

2. Preoccupation with how much I weigh.

The scale and I have been best enemies for years. The numbers change as I get older. But what do numbers really tell me? When I give the scale the power to determine whether or not I'm presentable, whether or not I can "pass" for thin, for "normal," for "acceptable", it crushes my self-esteem. I am constantly judging my body in a negative way. My stomach is way too big. If only my butt were half that big! My butt is too flat. My thighs are flabby and have a roadmap of the United States on them. Goodness, gracious! With this stinking thinking, it's a wonder I can do anything at all some days!

3. Preoccupation with the perfect food plan.

Regardless of my food plan, and I have had many different ones over my years in OA and in my dieting years, it's not about the food. It's about discipline, consistency, and knowing that recovery is not about the food plan. The food plan is a tool that we use to stay abstinent. I cannot maintain any food plan without turning it over to my Higher Power. Simple. Not always easy, but simple!

What works is not giving the food the power, but giving my power to God. God directs me on how to get through the most difficult, challenging and unsettling days. When I feel desperate, anxious or worried, and it's too late to call anyone, I open my Big Book and start reading. It's better than any pill or self-talk. It's the miracle, for me. It adjusts my attitude to one of acceptance and gratitude that there is an answer, and for me it is in reaching out to God for comfort, also known as prayer. Feels better than any junk food ever invented!

#### 4. Fuzzy Boundaries.

How many times have I gone out to see a friend when I was tired or just wanted to change my mind because there was something good on tv? How many times have I talked to a friend and adopted their problem as my own? How many times have I tried to fix my husband instead of working on my own daily inventory? Fuzzy boundaries always led to thoughts of food as the solution, because then the food is internalized as the problem, and I don't have to think about how I didn't take care of myself once again. When I focus on others, I am really taking control and power from them and giving it to myself as a way of making myself feel better and thinking that I'm their Higher Power. That is crazy-making.

#### 5. Inability to Distinguish Hunger from Appetite.

My body works amazingly well for me, which is another gift from God that I ignore because of my disease. I cannot tell the difference between true hunger and appetite. My appetite is so huge that it often becomes confused for hunger. Maybe I didn't eat enough at breakfast. So now I should eat a very large lunch. Or, maybe that one portion wasn't enough. I still feel hungry. Or, I worked very hard today, better give myself a good snack before I go to bed. And a good snack is never a piece of fruit or some green beans. What I've learned with my many years in OA rooms is that one of the ways my disease tricks me is to tell me that I have not had enough, and I should not deprive myself, and I need more. I am hungry, and that's the worst feeling in the world. This is my disease talking. Even on the few occasions when I'm truly hungry between meals, nothing bad will happen to me. I won't die, I won't faint, and I won't have to eat this minute. I also cannot distinguish hunger from thirst. As I am willing to drink more water, which is a real challenge for me, I find I'm not as "hungry," meaning that I feel better and don't have the need for food to become the answer that I automatically choose. If I have been overeating on a particularly bad day when I'm not working my program and I let my appetite run wild, the next day I will logically feel hungry if I eat normal portions, because I have confused the heck out of my body. So that's why consistency and discipline are important in determining whether or not I am truly hungry to the point of needing food this minute, or whether I can distract myself, talk to God, make a phone call, write, take a walk, etc. until it's time to eat.

#### 6. Denial of the truth.

It's an illusion to think that I can tolerate desserts which are in the sugar family and usually have lots of fat and salt added for that perfect addictive flavor. My husband has a stash of these "problem" foods – most of which fall into the category of 100% junk. If I'm in denial about the fact that I am perfectly contented physically with the meal I had, I might wander into his room, and help myself to a handful of junk. Why? Because I'm a compulsive overeater. It's just another symptom of my disease that I keep right on thinking of food when I am not in the

least bit hungry. If someone were to invite me to a movie or a dance right after dinner, I'd fly out the door to meet them. I wouldn't think about food. So, it's not about the food. It's about emotional instability and spiritual dishonesty. How can I go through the first three steps of this program, admit my powerlessness over food, believe that God can restore me to a saner way of living, and agree to turn my will and my life over to the care of God if I deny the fact that food has been my way of coping with life, and it no longer works? I have to be honest about my limitations. If I had to have a leg removed, would I still try to run on two legs? Of course not. I would probably need crutches at the very least. For my ailment, the only crutch that works 100% is the honest admission of my powerlessness over my disease, and the trust that I can rely upon God to re-direct my impulses to a saner and more effective way of living.



# 2022 OA Buffalo Retreat

“From Newcomer to Recovered”

April 8-10 2022

**Location:** Christ the King Retreat Center ♦ 621 First Avenue South Buffalo, MN

**55313 Costs:**

- **Shared rooms:** \$192.00 before March 15 and \$200 after March 15
- **Private rooms\*:** \$212.00 before March 15 and \$220 after March 15
- **Program with meals and NO lodging:** \$100.00

*\*Private room availability is limited. No scholarships for private rooms.*

**Includes:** Friday: dinner and room, Saturday: three meals and room, Sunday: breakfast.

\* \$3 surcharge per meal/per person, gluten free or vegetarian (5 meals is \$15)

**Times:** Check-In: Friday 5:00, dinner 6:00, program 7:00 ♦ Check-Out: Sunday 10:30 am

To register online: <http://overeaters.org/upcoming-oa-events/>

To mail-in registration:

**a. Contact Sandy A at 763.228.3357 or [oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com](mailto:oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com)** for mailing address for mail in registrations.

b. Detach and complete mail-in form below. Include a check or money order for the full amount **PAYABLE TO UNITY INTERGROUP**

c. All reservations will be confirmed via email. If you want a confirmation via US mail, you must enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE).

**Questions or concerns, please contact Sandy A.**

Please note: All registrations must be paid in full. We do not accept partial payments. No credit card payments accepted for mail-in registration. All credit card payments must be online. At the Retreat, we will only accept cash or checks for literature, concessions, or raffle tickets. Refunds will only be issued in the event that the in person retreat is cancelled.

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**- Mail-In Registration Form**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Nametag: (1st name and first initial of last name):

\_\_\_\_\_ Home meeting:

\_\_\_\_\_

Room (circle): Private Shared Roommate request \_\_\_\_\_ Gender for

roommate assignments (circle): Male Female

\* If you register for a shared room without a roommate request, a roommate will be assigned for you. \* If you require a handicap room, please contact **Sandy A.** as there are a limited number.

**Special Accommodations:** (circle) Vision Hearing Mobility Other \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR NEEDS (e.g., room close to the elevators, dining hall, or main hall; quiet room for small groups; handicap accessible bathroom)

**Service Opportunities:** (circle all you are willing to do) Registration/check-in Small Group

Leader Timer for speakers Hear a 5<sup>th</sup> step Literature Wherever needed **Partial**

**Scholarship:** Send requests to Sandy A at [oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com](mailto:oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com)

**Dietary Restrictions and Special Foods:** Refrigerators are available if you want to bring food. The menu will be emailed to all participants. \* \$3 surcharge per meal/per person, gluten free or vegetarian

**Cancelation Policy:** Refunds will only be issued in the event that the in person retreat is cancelled.