



Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

Having a problem with food, weight or purging? Call our 24/7 hotline at **612-377-1600** and one of our volunteers will return your call.

In this issue:

Step Three Articles

OA Quick Steps workshop, Saturday March 14 & 28

Buffalo Retreat April 10-12

Third Step Prayer

12th Step Brainstorming Session March 14 10:30-12

Big Book Study May 1-3, 2015

Coming off my high horse

It was a giant step for me to take Step 3. I had always felt I was so in control of my life that I seldom asked God into my life. I had not thought of asking him to help with things in my life--they were not dire enough for his attention. Then my world came tumbling down as my 19 year old daughter told me she was a drug and alcohol addict and needed to go to rehab. Did I invite God in as a gentleman! NO. I demanded him to fix things. It was this experience that paved the way to going to my first HOW meeting in 1986.

In the past few months, I have completely understood that I was really powerless over many things in my life. I learned that if I did not take care of myself, I could not help anyone else. I had to come off my high horse and look at my own addiction and behavior. I could not do it alone, I had tried many, many times. I realized I was powerless against my disease and needed God as an active continuous part of my life. It is only through taking Step 3 and admitting I cannot do life by myself that I was able to continue to work the other steps and change myself and my life.

"I no longer try to bombard my life's problems, I try to bring them into agreement with God's Intention for me." (AA12 & 12 P. 40) I use the Serenity Prayer often. I am not perfect, I never will be, but I am progressing.

Anne W

"God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bare witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"
Alcoholics Anonymous 4th edition Pg. 63

Step Three: Where Words and Actions Meet

I have watched in amazement the numerous fellows around me who, upon finding the miracle of OA, fully embraced it and willingly walked a steady path of abstinence. I don't say that so as to put anyone on a pedestal (indeed, we all have clay feet). It is an honest appreciation for the strength and peace that they have found in the program. I continue to be inspired by the positive examples and tireless encouragement displayed by my fellows.

But not all of us found this journey to be such a linear path. For me, I discovered a distinct disconnect between my desperate desire to change and my inability to turn my life over to the care of my higher power. Because of that fact, my journey over the last few years since I found OA has been a winding path complete with detours. It's as if I was about to run a race but I tripped before I cleared the starting blocks. I realize now that it was a very familiar feeling. My entire adult life is pockmarked with brilliant "starts". I started with a trainer and a workout program. I started with large weight loss organization. I started to use a fancy new digital step counter. I started taking the latest and greatest weight loss pills and nutritional supplements. So many starts, yet each journey would last just a few steps.

But this is where the beauty of OA can shine so brightly. The hope it represents can penetrate those dark places where we hide our addiction. And Step Three is the turning point for so many of us. Acknowledging that I had a problem was not the most difficult step (Step One). Seeing how I fit in my clothes, realizing how much I obsessed about food, and understanding how willing I was to lie about binges, it was evident long before I discovered OA that I was powerless and my life was unmanageable. Step Two was also one that I could get my head around without much effort. As someone who has grown up in a family of faith, it was not difficult for me to understand that my higher power could help me fight this addiction. Having said that, there is a tre-

mendous difference between *knowing* where your strength comes from and *calling upon* that strength. Step Three is where words become actions, and desire becomes reality.

Our 12x12 book introduces this step with a clear description: "*practicing Step Three is like the opening of a door which to all appearances is still closed and locked. ... all we need is a key. THERE IS ONLY ONE KEY, and it is called WILLINGNESS.*" Yes! That's IT, folks! All we have to do is take this burden that we cling to so tightly and willingly hand it over to the care of God (as we understand Him). But if it's so easy to do, why do many of us stumble at this point? I'm reminded of a phrase that I have heard numerous times from another fellow: "It's easy to do, but it is also easy NOT to do." The good news is that you don't have to face this challenge all at once. You just have to dig deep, muster a small measure of strength and courage, and then willingly allow your higher power to carry you through THIS day. Just this one day you can feel peace, you can follow a plan that allows you to be free from obsession. And I can testify to the fact that this one day feels so good, you'll be willing and able to do it again tomorrow. One day at a time, one promise at a time, you will see those miracles happen in your life just as it has happened before within the people whose success you have been envious of. Your story will become a part of this journey, and your success will inspire others. And we will all continue to be blessed to walk this journey with you!

If you are new to our family of fellows, welcome! I would like to encourage you to stay on the journey. Whether your path up to this point has been linear or winding- keep coming back! The hope and peace that you are seeking is absolutely within your reach. And for those of you that have been here, that continue to faithfully attend meetings, to commit your food, and to reach out to others in need...thank you. Your success is saving your life, and the lives of others. Like me.

**Join us from 10:30-Noon on March 14
at Sumner Library
(611 Van White Memorial Blvd)
before the Unity Intergroup meeting for a**

**12th Step
Brainstorming
Session**



Help us brainstorm to answer that age-old question: "How do we reach the still-suffering compulsive eater?" At expos and fairs? At our meetings? In our day-to-day lives?

Bring a bag lunch and stay for the Unity Intergroup meeting that begins at 12:30 and goes to 2:30.

Come with your creative, out-of-the-box ideas and join us for this fun-filled session!

For more information, or if you have ideas but are unable to make it to the session, please contact Julie C at juliec-ug@hotmail.com.

Why I Go To Buffalo...

It's that time again...the Buffalo Retreat rolls around each year in early April. This year the event will be held Friday/Saturday/Sunday April 10, 11 and 12th. And...yes, I'm already registered. Here's why I go:

1. It part of my spring tune-up. I can only deal with so much winter. I've been in the rooms for over 10 years now and frankly, at times, program gets routine. I need and want an energy injection JUST about when winter is threatening to drag me down with its icy hands. The Buffalo Retreat once again will be that dash of spring that my program deserves!

2. I get to see old program friends and make new ones and really spend time. Meetings. Unity Day. Sponsorship Workshop. All great events, but a retreat is different. Meals, open spaces in the day and evening, and a range of events from speakers to board games to yoga and meditation, means I have the luxury of time to connect with friends, old and new, that enrich my recovery.

3. I just show up. Lodging? Done. Planned abstinent meals for two days? Done. Insight, Fellowship and Laughs? Done. Downtime without distraction? Done. All I have to do is arrive and experience.

4. Sometimes, a girl just has to get away. Look, I love my life, my husband and family as much as the next person, but sometimes I need it to be all about me. Self-care. Nurturing. It makes me a better wife, friend and fellow.

5. I always leave with something new to think about. From multi-generational recovery stories, to a great discussion on abstinent food plans/recipes and other "ah-ha" moments around program that I "think" I already know. The reward for growth is more growth. And for that, I'm grateful.

So...sign up. Invite a friend or fellow to join you. Take a risk to do something different. You never know what new gifts in your recovery await you!

Janelle N.

OA Unity Intergroup Presents



Location: Christ the King Retreat Center 621
First Avenue South
Buffalo, MN 55302

Times: Check-In: 6 to 7pm on Friday
Check-out: 2pm Sunday

Shared Rooms:
\$178 by March 11th; \$198 after
Private Rooms: \$250

Partial Scholarships are available
Contact **Amanda S 402-889-5196** or
Email: 2014BuffaloReg@gmail.com

Includes: Two nights lodging, 3 meals on Saturday, 2 meals on Sunday
Deadline for Registration: March 31st

*****Register online:** www.overeaters.org***

Your reservation will be confirmed via email, unless you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for confirmation by US mail. Make check or money order payable to: **Unity Intergroup**
Mail registration form and check to:

Buffalo Registration c/o Amanda S.
160 Homestead Road, Apt #203
Mankato, MN 56001

Questions: **Amanda S 402-889-5196** or email: 2014BuffaloReg@gmail.com

FULL NAME: _____ NAMETAG TO READ: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

HOME MEETING: _____ MALE () FEMALE ()

ROOM: PRIVATE SHARED: (Roommate) _____

If you REQUIRE a handicap room or single room, please contact Amanda.

Special Accommodations: Circle those that apply: Vision Hearing Mobility Other: _____

Service Opportunities: Circle all you are willing to do:

Registration/Check in Timer for speakers Lead a small group Hear a 5th step Whatever needed

Getting Used to Growing Awareness

Once I committed to a food plan and stopped eating the foods that "talked to me," I started to feel emotions I had buried or numbed away with food. Then I became more aware of my character defects: my people pleasing, my fears, how dishonest I was by what I *didn't* say. I often felt worse about myself. It took me awhile to realize that the growing awareness of my character defects was a gift from my Higher Power.

I have a bookmark that says: **Practice Awareness Until Spirit Emerges.** It makes me smile to remember how, in the beginning, I thought I needed to get busy and eliminate all my defects right away through a major work project that I would control. My sponsor helped me see that God was largely going to be in charge of that! That working the 12 Steps would be a process not a project.

As we go through the day, we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, 'Thy will be done.' We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions." AA Big Book 4th edition, pg. 87-88

Today, part of my daily action plan includes paying attention...practicing awareness... in an attitude of calm acceptance and trust. I am clear that awareness is the first step in God forming within me a Spirit-directed intuition. The tools of OA and the shared experience, strength and hope that I hear in our face to face meetings help me cooperate with God in what needs to be done.

Anonymous

Telephone Meetings Then and Now

I've been in OA a little more than three years. Within months of starting, I also began to "attend" an east-coast based telephone meeting. The daily Sunrise meeting (5:45 to 6:45 a.m. Central Time) is available by dialing [1-712-432-5200](tel:1-712-432-5200) plus an access code of 428-5115. (There is also a daily Sunset meeting at 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. at the same phone number.) There are voice prompts for how to connect.

The meetings begin with the Serenity Prayer, a welcome and invitation from the AA Big Book, and reading of the 12 steps. The sharing part of the meeting is based on the day's reading from Voices of Recovery and For Today. Sometimes as many as 120 people are attending. It helps me stay committed knowing that so many people are working their own daily recovery and also care about my recovery. We are a fellowship.

At first, I was frustrated by the sometimes long silences between sharing. It seemed like a ridiculous waste of precious time. I'd be irritated when certain people would repeatedly "break the rules" and read or share more than once a week. The first several times that I shared during the meeting I was petrified. I wanted to do it right—clear statements and perfect insights! I didn't leave a contact phone number or email address because I was afraid I'd be deluged by calls from "crazies."

Of course today, I laugh at, and am sometimes sad about, my earlier attitudes. I thank my Higher Power that the OA program has softened my judgments, irritation, perfectionism and desire to control. Today I feel a sense of kinship with those who share, and I feel compassion for those who are obviously struggling. I've learned a lot from people who have called after I've shared in a meeting. I listen with pen and paper in hand and have pages of notes filled with solid recovery.

OA's website (www.aa.org) has a comprehensive list of dozens of telephone meetings offered at almost every hour of the day and night. This week I intend to find a telephone meeting dedicated to working the 12 Steps of OA. Care to join me?!

Anonymous



Unity Intergroup presents:

10th Annual "Find Abstinence Through The Big Book" Workshop

May 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2015

North Hennepin Community College, Room CLA 144

7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Free Parking, ADA Compliant Building (nhcc.edu)

Workshop Cost \$21 or \$26 (at the door) or \$16 webcast

Books/Materials/Supplies available for sale

Big Book Study Hours:

Friday May 1st registration starting at 6:00 p.m.

Friday May 1st Event 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Saturday May 2nd registration starting 8:30 a.m.

Saturday May 2nd Event 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Sunday May 3rd 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon

- ❖ Our Canadian host, an OA member, will lead this transforming study revealing how the message in the Big Book applies and works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.
- ❖ "This study of the Big Book was life changing for me. I finally found abstinence after two years with the help of this workshop!" ~Anonymous
- ❖ Our speaker also goes into detail on actively working all the 12 steps. The 4th-step inventory material available from oabigbook.info will also be covered in a detailed step-by-step manner.



- * Info - Chris just42day.24@gmail.com
- * Mail-in registrations confirmed via email only
- * Meeting will be *broadcast* live via the Internet* offering a rich audio & video listening experience
- * Back again in 2015! Sunday afternoon (1:00 - ~5:00 p.m.) onsite hands-on inventory workshop. Included in registration fee
- * Scholarships offered
- * Microwave available (no fridge)

- * Online registration
- * Please see our FAQ for more details - overeaters.org
- * NOT Hennepin Technical College

Register online at overeaters.org or
 Send form & check payable to Unity Intergroup:
 Kari E, 1376 Langford Trail, New Prague, MN 56071
karihogen@hotmail.com
 \$21 mail-in deadline is April 24th/online is April 29th

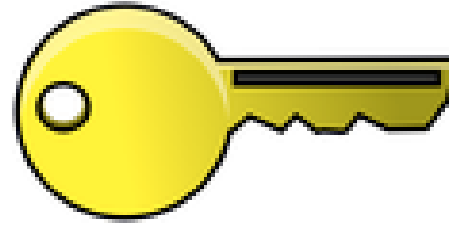
Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Please contact me for service opportunities

Onsite \$21.00 Quantity Webcast \$16.00 Quantity Total Amount Enclosed _____

The Key

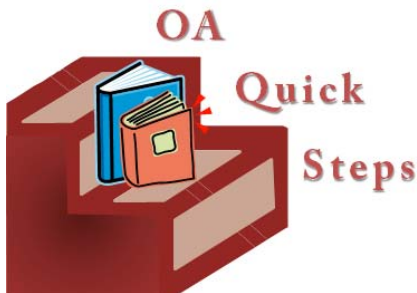


Step three to me is synonymous with “key” – being entirely ready and willing to turn our lives over to our God (or Higher Power) – as we see Him. Using the key of willingness, the door swings open. I tried to leave my baggage outside the door but apparently I wasn’t ready yet. So I brought it in with me hoping that God would relieve me of my burdens. I recited the third step prayer and asked God for His help. I was willing.

Sometimes, with all the business of life, the willingness slips. Then I start again and recite this simple prayer and ask for willingness. When it comes, it’s a great place to be. Sometimes I have to ask more than once – God has other things on His mind. Self will blocks the entry of faith. So I ask to have self will removed. It was removed and once again it came back. Once again, I asked to have it removed. The disease is persistent but so am I.

“The more we become willing to depend upon a higher power, the more independent we actually are.” I had to think this over before I could agree. I can leave my problems on His shoulders and get on with enjoying my life. There is a lot of security in this. It is dependence, but it is a healthy dependence.

Step Three is a great beginning of recovery but I found my life at this point to still be unmanageable. My sponsor reassured me that things would get better IF I kept an open mind and trusted my Higher Power. Recovery is the safe harbor I always wanted. The door of willingness opens a little wider as time goes on. Some of the baggage is outside of the door for which I am grateful.



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 through the 12 Steps in just two weeks!

OA Quick Steps Workshop

Two-Session Format Workshop

Saturday from 9:00am-12:00pm, March 14 & 28, 2015

Pilgrim Lutheran

3901 First Ave S, Minneapolis

To register, contact Julie C. at 612-558-3687 or oaquicksteps@gmail.com. Registration mandatory. Numbers are limited. There are no fees for this workshop, but we will be collecting a 7th Tradition donation. Time commitment is two, three-hour sessions, plus homework. Expect to be very busy working on recovery for these weeks!

For people who are new to OA or just need help getting through the Steps

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.

Expressions of Unity

The April *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Four: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him" and will be sponsored by the Circle Pines Saturday 8am meeting. Although one meeting or group generally sponsors each newsletter, we welcome articles from anyone. Please indicate if it is okay to print your name with your article and email your contributions by March 21st to ExpressionsofUnity@gmail.com.

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

The Bloomington Tuesday group is looking for people interested in helping start a meeting in Spanish. If interested, please contact Megan at meganbkohls@gmail.com or 651-226-0059.

El grupo "Bloomington Martes" está buscando personas interesadas en ayudar con el inicio de una reunión en español. Si está interesado, por favor póngase en contacto con Megan meganbkohls@gmail.com or 651-226-0059.



Intergroup Board



Chair—Peg M	612-280-6119	Pegm.unityIG@gmail.com
Vice Chair—Mary T	612-940-7654	marytunityig@gmail.com
Treasurer—Bob S	763-229-6196	bonasachs@q.com
Secretary—Jill	651-739-0212	jshortreed@centurylink.net

Conference Dial-in Number: (712) 432-0360



UIG Meeting Participant
Access Code: 468702#
Details of the telephone system and keypad options;
<http://www overeaters.org/conferencing.html>

Mark Your Calendar...

March 14	12th Step Brainstorming Session 10:30-12
March 28	Labor, Health and Benefit Fair—volunteers needed
April 10-12	Buffalo Retreat
May 1-3	Big Book Study



Web submissions are due the **first** Saturday of each month.

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 **third** Saturday of each month.