



Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

Step 7: Humbly Asked Him to Remove Our Shortcomings.

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.

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Step 7 and the transition from self-reliance to God-reliance

My life before OA HOW was characterized by countless vain attempts to try to be a normal eater with a normal weight. But really I just wanted to “have my cake and eat it too.”

When I came to the program, I found out that I had to surrender myself – including my character defects – to the God of my understanding. Isn’t it enough that I have given up compulsive eating? Why do I have to ask God to remove my shortcomings too?

Giving up food and compulsive eating is not enough for me to be able to sustain my recovery from food addiction. When I got to Step 7, I had gained the humility I needed. It came from working Steps 1-6 to the best of my ability. Every vain attempt I tried to lose weight and stay thin was just another form of self-reliance that didn’t work for the long haul.

Despite my active participation in another twelfth-step program, I was not able to apply the principles I had learned there to my compulsive eating. Step 7 told me that I needed to place my reliance on others – God, sponsor, and the group – if I was going to be able to maintain my abstinence from compulsive eating.

Step 7 in the AA book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, says “As long as we placed self-reliance first, a genuine reliance upon a Higher Power was out of the question.” Re-reading this in light of my compulsive eating helped me make the connection that my attempts to control my weight were just that – misplaced self-reliance. I needed to surrender my will in order to put my reliance in the right place. Surrendering my will includes getting abstinent through a food plan, working the steps, and being accountable to a sponsor (among other things).

Humility means inviting God in and seeking His will. Step 7 is where I ask God to remove whatever might be standing in my way of doing His will rather than my own. The book goes on to say, “That basic ingredient of all humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will, was missing.”

Today I want to seek and do God’s will for my life. When I take my daily inventory, it reveals to me some of the ways that I might be placing self-reliance first. It definitely happens from time to time. But today, if and when it happens, I have the tools of the program to point me back toward God.

I am grateful that my reliance is in the right place today and that I don’t have to do this alone. Thank God for OA!

~Anonymous

TSW Corner

Welcome to the TSW Corner – a forum to share inspiration, hope and ideas for all of us in OA, whether recovering, struggling, or both. Here you will find stories of hope, inspirational thoughts, and ideas for helping you work your own program and on carrying the message to others. We invite you to contribute your own Twelfth Step Within ... because ‘Together We Can Do What We Could Never Do Alone!’ For more information about ‘Twelfth Step Within’ go to: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/resources/twelfth-step-within/>

We welcome your story, thoughts and ideas. If you have something to share in this ‘Corner’, send them to Annette at uig.tswcorner@gmail.com.

Fail to plan and plan to fail. We’ve all heard it before. But there are certain times of the year when we need to keep this keenly in mind. Summertime with so many opportunities for travel, picnics, and impromptu activities is definitely one of those times. For me, the very nature of the season can be a trap in itself. Rather, it is the image that I have of what summer ‘should’ look like; relaxed, fun, spontaneous, etc. But I still need to take the time to make a plan so that I am safe with my food and therefore my recovery.

This past weekend, I was privileged to attend the Region 4 Convention in Des Moines, Iowa. I had a blast and part of the reason that was possible is because I knew what my food was going to look like. The other reason I had so much fun is because of my continually growing recovery which is a result of the miracle of abstinence, my daily reprieve from compulsive eating through this amazing program, and my blessed willingness to keep the food in its proper place.

Here is what my planning looked like. First, I looked at the convention schedule. I factored in the time that I need to leave to be on time, the banquet that I had purchased and what possible meals might be eaten out. After considering these and other factors, I decided that I would need to leave no later than 11:00 AM and that eating lunch while driving would be my best option. I also decided that I might just as well plan to do the same on the way home so that I could get home sooner and have some down time. Since I would be driving, taking finger foods was imperative, so I planned 2 of the same meals for those travel times. I take the same breakfasts with me when I travel so those meals were easy.

Saturday lunch would be the banquet, so that left Friday and Saturday dinners. I suspected that I might eat out with others on Saturday and brought along Friday dinner to eat with my friend whom I was staying with. It actually turned out that my friend and I ate out Friday evening and we brought our meals with us to eat on Saturday.

I made this plan early in the week, and since I was going to be particularly busy, I actually planned one full week of meals so that I could have more freedom for other things during the week. I also did myself a huge favor. I made a dinner during the week that would serve as dinner on Sunday and lunches for Monday and Tuesday. I had packed them up the same day I prepared them and then only needed to pop the dish in the microwave to prepare my dinner on Sunday evening. This was a huge blessing, because I was extremely tired.

I will admit that I don’t always like doing the preparatory work that I need to do, but I am always glad I did because I know that the alternative is a return to the insanity of compulsive eating, and frankly, I really like my life these days. I don’t want to take any chances on losing what I have gained – a life increasingly ‘beyond my wildest dreams.’

Not quite ready to ask? Here's a bonus Step 6 article: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

I had been parroting the words...

I had been parroting the words of Step 6 when I was new to OA, but didn't actually understand them.

Defects of character...

After a lot of reflecting, I began to see my story more clearly. There was a deeper level of dysfunction and it went back to my childhood. I grew up in a house of ten children (and two overwhelmed parents.) Individual attention was a hot commodity, and I craved attention any way I could get it.

I was always hungry (for food and attention,) and our mealtimes were strictly regimented—snacking was forbidden. In order to receive dessert, our dinner plates had to be cleared, and I quickly learned that by eating foods that my siblings didn't want, I got attention. I was the one to whom food was secretly passed—not only did I get to be the hero to my brothers and sisters, I got to eat larger quantities, filling the hole in my life I thought was hunger.

A huge game changer happened when I learned to bake at age 10. My defects were getting stronger by the batch when I realized I could eat the batter! I quickly learned that doubling or tripling batches of sweets, I was able to eat even more!

Exceeding normal portions was my MO. I had no sense of the amounts that most people seem to inherently understand. Doubling batches continued into my adult life as I seamlessly carried that indulgent mentality into our little family of four. Two kids and I was still cooking for 12 people! Over time, I became infamous in the community for my decadent cookies, tarts and other baked goods.

In OA literature, Step Six is considered the most difficult of the Twelve Steps. Saying that we're ready, and actually being ready are two different things. We want to live consequence-free whilst continuing on with our defects.

Food became my coping mechanism for comfort, to ease frustration over any and every problem that came my way. Weight was not much of an issue because I was always busy. It wasn't until I got arthritis in my mid 30's that I started to gain weight along with the medications trying to help the pain. I had to leave my profession and felt frustrated I wasn't able to do the activities I wanted and food was always there to comfort me.

In my 40's I joined AA, and found a release from alcohol addiction using the Twelve Steps. Shortly after finding AA, I realized my eating was out of control similar to my use of alcohol. I was told to use the 12 Steps to combat over eating.

I was never able to figure that out on my own. Recently losing 40 pounds using an expensive diet program, I found myself starting to regain the weight as soon as I was on my own. I became determined to figure this out and to learn how to use the Steps to do it.

Joining OA, I was relieved to hear others have found release from their food addiction. In working the Steps I am finding, just as the OA 12 x 12 says, Step 6 is the hardest!

Learning how the steps work relating to food, I find my defects are more embedded with regards to my food addiction. Re-viewing Step 4 again, I can see the development of my unhealthy eating, uncovering what my defects did for me and now are doing to me. I understand the way to use the steps for overeating and am finding relief little by little each day from the compulsion of overeating.

My character defect of procrastination is slowly going away as I figure out how to work through projects, home chores, and family functions using realistic plans and removal of expectations. Previously I used food to procrastinate, ending up napping to sleep off the effects of overeating, feeling sluggish and upset with myself. It would block me from involvement with others and isolation. **(Continued on Page 4...)**

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The most important part of my day is asking my Higher Power for the willingness and the power to carry out his direction in my life. I give him all my concerns. I pray not only daily, but at times hourly to remove my obsession.

My attempts to remove my own shortcomings and obsession didn't work. I am powerless over each of my defects that in turn lead to my obsession with food. When I ask my Higher Power to relieve me of them, I am pleasantly surprised to find a little relief and a better understanding of how to use that Power.

I don't always get immediate relief, but my behavior and mindset are becoming congruent with how I want to live my life with God on God's terms and not my own.

Knowing that progress is just that, progress—not perfection, helps me continue on this road toward the freedom from overeating.

~Anonymous

Becoming Right Sized

In step six I became completely ready to let go of my defects of character, knowing that I am powerless over ridding myself of these traits. Of course this is a process but the important thing I have come to understand about this is I can't, God can, and so I'll let him.

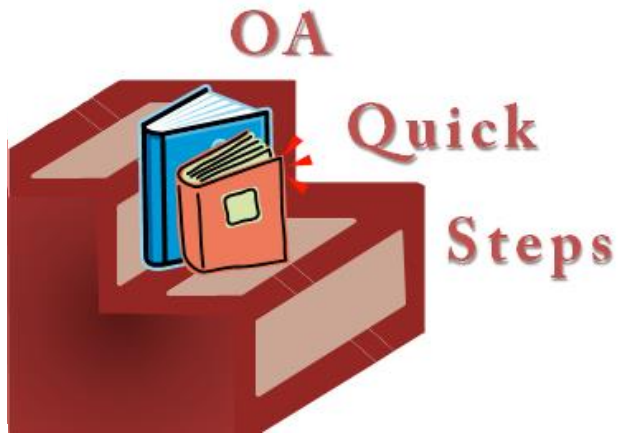
Which then brings me to Step Seven. First of all from my experience working the steps I will say that being cleanly abstinent for 11+ years has made step 7 a possibility. I attempted for years to work the steps while still binging and restricting. I could never get out of the self hatred, shame, and low self esteem that I habitually felt while in the food. I never really worked step one or fully admitted that yes I was a compulsive Overeater and needed help. While in the food I was still driving the bus so the idea of God doing anything for me was out of the question. When I heard the word humility in 7 I thought humiliation and I had had enough of that and wanted nothing to do with it.

Today in recovery step seven looks a lot different and feels like a slice of heaven. I now see humility as a gift, an awareness and a whole lot of acceptance of who and what I am shortcomings and all. I'm just another human being with a deep desire and willingness to do it different. Pain has been a great motivator in finally being ready to allow my higher to help me change some of these old patterns and beliefs that continuously get in my way of my relationships.

A lot of Seven is about becoming right sized not better or worse, not different but part of fellowship of people that hold my hand and help guide the way. They are my God with skin!!! This step is where I begin to draw closer to my God and where I start to feel at peace with his will for me. I ask him daily to show me the way of love and service and to relieve me of the bondage of self. It takes time and discipline but the rewards of doing so are unbelievable, it has become a way of life and it is no longer a burden. Yes I make mistakes and my old ways pop up but today I have a solution and it's all because I finally put down the food and picked up the OA program.

It's a miracle how I have changed in recovery, it is truly a gift of my God doing for me what I could not do for myself. If I could say one thing don't quit before the miracle happens.

Anonymous



**Are you new to OA or
just need help getting
through the Steps?**

OA Quick Steps Workshop

Saturdays 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

July 16 and 30, 2016

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!

Location

**Nativity of Mary Church
9900 Lyndale Avenue South
Bloomington, MN**

To register, contact Gene O. at 952-835-0789 or oaquicksteps@gmail.com. Registration is required as class size is limited.

You will need to have a sponsor who can help you through the 4th and 5th Steps.

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!

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.

I Cannot Expect God to Magically Remove my Defects All at Once

I worked Step 7 six years ago during my first year in OA.

I am now going through the steps again (I'm told we are never "done"--how true that seems the longer I am in program).

The first two words of this step "Humbly asked" remind me that humility is a huge part of this step. To me, this means that I cannot expect God to magically remove all my defects in one magical swoop. I have to continue to do my part--which means brutal honesty and completing my 10th step inventory every day and reading it to my sponsor.

As I work the steps again, I am uncovering more shortcomings that I didn't know were a problem for me my first time through. There are aspects of my personality and behavior that simply do not serve me anymore--maybe at one time I needed them to cope with life, but I have other tools and a Higher Power now.

I believe God only shows us what we are ready to see and handle. More will be revealed this time through, and I am ready.

Another part of humility is continuing to cultivate a teachable mindset.

I recently discovered that the traits that bug me the most in others, I am finding in myself--"you spot it, you got it," as they say. :-)

I've had to ask myself a few poignant questions as I get ready to take this step again. What am I getting from hanging on to these character defects? Am I ready to let them go? Do I believe God can remove these shortcomings?

Working the steps and answering these kinds of questions can be uncomfortable. Freedom isn't free. But I know from listening to my fellows that it is ALWAYS worth it. There is light on the other side. And I want that light.

~Anonymous

I Took Self-Reliance to an Impossible Level

Since this step specifically concerns itself with humility, I thought I better look up the definition on Google.

"A modest or low view of one's own importance."

As a compulsive over eater I didn't have enough humility at my job or in my life. I went around acting like a know-it-all. I look back on those years now and cringe for the way I treated people. I thought I was successful then but still binged. When things weren't going well I binged even more.

It seemed no matter if things were going well or poorly food was the center of my universe. I didn't have the proper perspective to see that character-building and spiritual values had to come first. I was too focused on material things instead of what was truly important like God, Family, and Friends.

My Dad always told me "If you want something done you do it yourself. Never rely on anyone else." So needless to say I took self-reliance to an impossible level. Coming into the Program and finally realizing that I needed to put a genuine reliance on God instead of myself. It is the only way of having lasting recovery.

Knowing I can rely on people in the Fellowship has helped me reach out to them too even if it's been a challenge. As I have learned more about humility the more my attitude towards God has changed. He is doing for me what I've never been able to do for myself.

Linda H.

Expressions of Unity

The August *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all" and will be sponsored by the Owatonna 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 July 23rd 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.

Come and join the newly elected Unity Intergroup in action.

All members of OA are welcome at Intergroup meetings.

Next meeting:

July 9, 2016 12:30-2:30

Sumner Library

611 Van White Memorial Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Intergroup Board



Chair—Mary T	612-940-7654	marytunityig@gmail.com
Vice Chair—Dawn S	612-310-1703	dawnspielman@mac.com
Treasurer—Suzanne J	952-220-5358	SuzanneJ.unityig@gmail.com
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**Conference Dial-in
Number: (712) 432-0360**



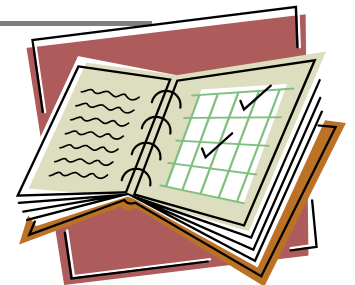
UIG Meeting Participant
Access Code: 468702#

Details of the telephone
system and keypad options;

[http://www overeaters.org/
conferencing.html](http://www overeaters.org/conferencing.html)

Mark Your Calendar...

July 9	Unity Intergroup meeting
July 16 & 30	OA Quick Steps



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.