



Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

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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My Higher Power's Qualities Today

I was told early on in the program that if I didn't make a connection with something outside myself I would eventually fall into relapse. And that is what I did for over 12 years because I was trying to work this program alone. Oh, yes there were people around me in the meetings, but I continued to only rely on me, myself and I. I thought I knew what was best for me. But, I did not.

In the OA 12 x 12 p. 92 it states, "In step eleven we are challenged to actively seek to improve our relationship with our Higher Power in the same way we might develop any relationship, by taking the time on a regular basis to be with our Higher Power.

What a wonderful concept. I know for me when it comes to relationships I can't build a relationship with someone without spending time with them. I need to also be a good listener and share things about myself. The more I get to know that person, the more I begin to trust, open up and really become the person my Higher Power wants me to be.

I don't know about you, but it isn't easy for me to open up and share who I am. And if I don't like that person I am not going to spend much of my time building a relationship with them. Well that is what happened in my relationship with my Higher Power. I didn't like my current Higher Power so I didn't spend time or even try to form a relationship. Eventually I realized things were not going to get better and so I must find something outside myself. So, I thought to myself, what are all the qualities that I like in my friends and maybe I can apply those to my Higher Power.

So today my Higher Power's qualities consist of: unconditional loving, trustworthy, caring, a good listener, always present, nonjudgmental. Because I appreciate all those qualities I now have a Higher Power I am more comfortable being around.

I have established a routine of daily prayer and meditation that I have been consistently doing for a number of years. I do walking prayer and meditation during which time I talk to God and then I make time to listen. And by being consistent with this practice I have built a wonderful relationship with my Higher Power. I look forward to spending time with God and when I miss a time or two I can really tell the difference. I am not as happy, joyous or free. Because of my higher power, I have been given the gift of abstinence for over 15 years. This wasn't even ever in the real of possibilities for me before.

As the OA 2016 convention is approaching for me that was a place where I received a lot of hope and encouragement. Come and join the fun and maybe ask people how they work step 11. There is no right or wrong way to practice this step, only finding out what way works out best for you.

Jill S. UI Secretary

Step 11... the Daily Reprieve

In our literature it describes many types and ways to do prayer and meditation. I have my own unique ways of connecting to my HP and these have certainly changed over the 36 years I have been in the OA rooms.

Much of my spiritual experience comes to me through others. At my first OA meeting I heard the 12 steps, the 12 Traditions and the Reading: "Rarely have we seen a person fail, who has thoroughly followed our path..." and I felt warm inside, like I was home. It replaced the warmth I used to feel from eating all day. It felt like truth was being spoken.

It must have been a powerful impression because I am still here. I would like to think I have matured over the years....not sure about that.....but I can tell you for certain that I have had a million spiritual experiences, many of them involving my fellows in recovery. God with skin on is what we call each other.

When there are many tasks to do together we can get them done. Even when challenges come up while serving on an intergroup board, Region 4 or the World Service level together we can work it out. Our World Service Trustee said that doing service above the group level expands your Spiritual Experience.

I have to agree this is true for me. It has been a spiritual experience for me to serve in the Intergroup for the last 2 years. It seems my HP drew me into this service in much the same way the compulsion to eat was lifted right out of me. It was not of my effort, but I was directed.

As a result of how I got there I am having a blast. The monthly meeting is becoming a pretty fun place to hang out. Who would have thunk it? Just being with each other is the spiritual experience. If you are considering going to the Convention, please do. Being there will expand your spiritual experience and it will expand mine when I see you! Blessings in Unity,

Mary T. Unity IG Chair

Tradition 11: Attraction Rather than Promotion

I don't know about you, but I've known a lot of people who can talk a really good talk. And I had a long history of setting those people up on pedestals, only to be disillusioned as I later realized there was no substance behind their words.

Furthermore, these people rarely had my best interests at heart,. Which meant I ended up struggling to trust the words of others.

Which is why I'm so grateful for the wisdom of this Tradition: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion: we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication."

It was so much easier for me to trust the shared experience I heard in the rooms, experiences that sounded so familiar, than to listen to some slick talker insist that THIS was my answer. I was able to decide for myself.

I realize, too, that this tradition respects and trusts my ability to decide for myself. Which means this program respects my dignity. What a gift to my self-esteem!

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.

Raise your hand if you know what IDEA Day is. For those of you that don't have your hand in the air, IDEA Day stands for International Day of Experiencing Abstinence and is celebrated on the OA calendar the 3rd Saturday in November – this year it is November 19. This special day was established to ‘encourage OA members worldwide to begin or reaffirm their abstinence from compulsive overeating.’

From the very beginning, I have loved the concept of IDEA Day. I have been in recovery for 12 years, but it took me a very long time to get there. And I have seen the growth and the joy that comes – sooner or later - as a result of putting down the food. As such, I love the idea of supporting others in experiencing abstinence and hopefully finding their own recovery.

So what does one do on IDEA Day? There are many things we can do. We can reaffirm our own abstinence and recovery by doing an inventory using the ‘Strong Abstinence Checklist’ (available at oa.org) or reevaluating our plan of eating with our sponsors.

We can support others in becoming abstinent by making extra calls to share the joy and beauty of our own abstinence, by offering to share an abstinent meal with someone who is not currently abstinent, or by attending the monthly Newcomer meeting and sharing what we have learned about abstinence with newcomers. (The Newcomer Meeting takes place the 3rd Saturday of every month from 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. at Sumner Library: 611 Van White Memorial Blvd in Minneapolis.)

Those not currently abstinent can get to an extra meeting, read some of our amazing pamphlets on abstinence, use extra tools, or discuss abstinence with our sponsors and/or other abstinent members.

Here is what I commit to doing this year to celebrate IDEA Day. First, I plan to talk about IDEA Day in my home meeting - stressing the gifts I have received as a result. If it's open, I will take the meeting that week. Next, I am going to have an abstinent lunch get-together with others from my group. Finally, I am going to spend some time that day evaluating my own abstinence and the things I do to support that recovery to see if there are any changes I need to make.

Of course, there are many more ideas for honoring IDEA Day. I challenge the reader to find their own way to commit or recommit to abstinence by discussing it at your meeting and/or with your sponsor.

New Meeting Starting!!!

A new OA meeting is starting in Faribault on October 5 at 6:00 pm at South Central College, Room B102.

Several Faribault people who were attending the Owatonna meeting (a 30-minute-drive) have pulled together, ordered start-up materials, and are posting the CAL posters in Faribault and Northfield.

We will have convention information available at our first meeting, too!

Meditation Helps

Meditation has been an ongoing part of my life for a long time but until OA I lost track of listening to my higher power. My HP "speaks to me" in the form of messages, gentle guidance and reminders. I've had the experience of direct connection and communication a couple of different times in my life, but like any relationship if you don't pay attention, communication stops.

Step 11 helps me to remember to listen, a great reminder of the reality that this two-way relationship is not asking for what I want and expecting to get it, but being still, listening and following through based on the message I receive, whether it's what I think it's right or not.

How do I know when it's my higher power and not my disease or my ego rationalization? The evidence is clear to me. If it's my higher power it feels "clean" there's no reaction in my heart. If it's my ego or the disease, I can feel it, almost like a sour taste in my gut, like something artificial in my sense of self value.

I've recognized the difference at times in my life, but I used to ignore it when I wanted MY WAY, or something to make me feel better, (which was really the disease talking). Now I ask first, listen, allow myself the peace of following that guidance. It isn't always that way, I'm not perfect but the "aftertaste", the discomfort in my heart that I know I will have is so uncomfortable I'm inclined to not do what I know is from my ego self or the disease.

If I'm in doubt I wait, I keep listening, until I know for sure that the message is from my higher power before acting on it. I feel my HP living through me the more I surrender.

The more I surrender my food and my desire to control my environment the more peaceful my life is, the more I get done and the easier life is in general. When something does get hard I stop I asked I listen I breathe, pause, hesitate, instead of reacting.

True surrender is not giving up, it is Letting Go. It is seriously giving over to Divine guidance that we can all tap into. We just need to get still enough to hear it.

Meditation helps.

Focus on your breath. feel it going in and out of your nostrils. Focus there. Thoughts will come in, the monkey mind, the judgement, the problems, the disease, just come back to the breath. Don't criticize yourself for thinking thoughts, for making lists, for losing track, just go back to your breath.

Don't think about thinking just focus on your breath and remember that that's what you need to do. Gradually, over time thoughts became less disturbing. By focusing on your breathing you will start to hear and feel your HP coming to you, offering you the gift of positive change and healing thoughts.

This program gives us the tools to get still enough to learn the difference between the disease talk and our HP, Learn to forgive ourselves to forgive others, to learn to get out and stay out of the food, and get quiet enough to hear the messages that our HP has for us to be our best selves and live our best life.

Suzanne J.

UI Treasurer

DEEPENING THE STEPS

2016 MN STATE CONVENTION, NOV. 11, 12, 13

Registration for the 2016 OA Convention is NOW OPEN!

Deepening the Steps...such a great way to live!

This year's dual track allows a "deeper" dive into the Steps to recover from compulsive eating, and shows why working The 12 Steps gives us such a great way to live!

Inspiring Speakers share personal journeys around each of the Steps.

Speaker Panels discuss key topics that challenge and reward us.

Workshops offer insight on OA basics, abstinence, sponsorship, and body image.

Register Today! Convention starts Friday, November 11 at 7pm, and runs through Sunday, November 13 at 12:30pm. Get all the details on abstinent meals, accommodations/amenities and how-to-register at www overeaters.org. If you have a specific question, please email us at OAUnityConvention@gmail.com

Make it a Weekend! The recently renovated www.SheratonMinneapolisWest.com provides a luxurious backdrop for the 2016 Convention.

Make a weekend of it! Special Room Rate of \$99 (+tax) through 10/21/16.

Spread the Fun/Share the Cost! Up to 4 people per room. Slumber party anyone?

Immerse yourself in recovery...you deserve it!

****NEW in 2016** Artist Gallery Showcase!** This year, we want to showcase the abundance of creativity shared by our OA fellows. The Artists' Gallery Showcase on Saturday evening allows both professional and amateur OA artists to display their artwork throughout the weekend for everyone's pleasure. Join us Saturday evening to share the artwork, meet the artists and discuss their stories of creativity and recovery.

To find out how to include your drawing, painting, photography, fiber/metal craft, jewelry and ceramics, please contact Entertainment Committee Chair Tammy G. at (952) 292-2034 or OAUnityConvention@gmail.com.

Are you a vocalist, composer, poet/writer, actor or performance/comedy artist? We want to include your talents throughout convention! To participate, call the OA hotline, 612-377-1600, or email us at OAUnityCovention@gmail.com

****NEW Topics and Old Favorites**** Abstinence when All Hell Breaks Loose; Getting Past White-Knuckle Recovery & Relapse; OA Basics; plus old favorites such as body image, 100 lb-winners, virtual meeting huddles, and a sponsorship panel.

Share Your Wisdom! Tell us how YOU plan your abstinence when travel, family, holidays, children, career (and more!) comes up. **We want to share your tip at convention.** Go to www overeaters.org to complete our brief survey to share with us the tips and tricks that have worked for you!

We Need Volunteers! Convention can't happen without you. There are many opportunities -- find one that works for you. Sign up at www overeaters.org.

Yours in service -- Beth K, Convention Chair

12 Step Promises – Step by Step (*Keep this—it will be used at the Convention!*)

1. We admitted we were powerless over food, that our lives had become unmanageable.

It may seem incredible that these men are to become happy, respected, and useful once more. How can they rise out of such misery, bad repute and hopelessness? The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us, they can happen with you. Should you wish them above all else, and be willing to make use of our experience, we are sure they will come. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that! (BB 153)

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. (BB 50)

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

As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. (BB 63)

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on the them as sick people. (BB 70)

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

We can look the world in the eye. Our fears fall from us. (BB 75)

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

No longer do we go through life clinging desperately to the past, resistant to change. From now on, we will strive to keep ourselves entirely ready for any transformations our Higher Power wants to bring about in us. (OA 12&12 58)

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Repeated practice of step seven enables us to form a working partnership with our Higher Power through which we are relieved of the defects which have blocked our effectiveness in the world. (OA 12&12 65-66)

8. Made a list of persons we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

If that degree of humility could enable us to find the grace by which such a deadly obsession could be banished, then there must be hope of the same result respecting any other problem we could possibly have. (AA 12&12 76)

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

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. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. (BB 83)

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Practicing the program has given us many gifts-gifts which we wouldn't trade for the quick-and-easy solutions to our compulsive eating many of us once sought in every new diet. (OA 12&12 90)

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. (BB 86)

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. (BB 89)

Overeaters Anonymous Strong Abstinence Checklist (*Also used at Convention!*)

“Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.” – Overeaters Anonymous Definition of Abstinence

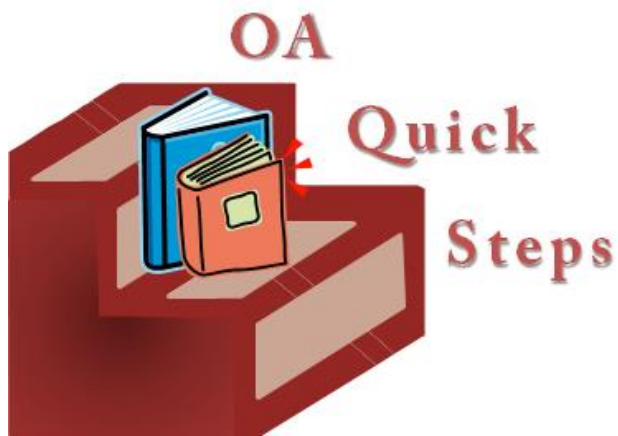
Use this valuable checklist every day to support keeping your abstinence strong and intact.

Checklist

- Have I been abstinent today?
- Did I pray and meditate today?
- Am I maintaining or working toward a healthy body weight?
- Did I rely on my Higher Power to get or stay abstinent today?
- Is what I am currently doing working for me to remain abstinent?
- If I am having problems, have I asked someone else what they are doing?
- Have I made an OA call today?
- Did I have an attitude of gratitude today?
- Did I plan my food today?
- Have I helped someone else today?
- Did I have an action plan in place to stay abstinent today?
- Do I have a sponsor and am I working the Steps with that person?

Writing Exercise

- What is compulsive eating for me?
- What are the foods and food behaviors that trigger me to eat compulsively?
- Am I afraid to get abstinent and, if yes, why?
- Why do I think abstinence is important?
- What do I do to stop eating compulsively?
- What Steps do I take to remain abstinent in all circumstances?
- What is the difference between abstinence and a plan of eating?
- What actions do I take to maintain my abstinence and achieve or maintain a healthy body weight?
- How do I begin my day in order to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors?
- What Tools do I regularly use?
- How does remaining abstinent improve the quality of my life?
- What place does food have in my life today?



**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

November 5 and 19, 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

Rocky Creek Estates

627 Rocky Creek Drive NE

Rochester, 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.

Expressions of Unity

The November *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs" and will be sponsored by the Golden Valley Saturday 10am 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 November 19th 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 Unity Intergroup in action.

All members of OA are welcome at Intergroup meetings.

Next meeting: AT THE CONVENTION (no convention fee required to attend)

Sheraton Minneapolis West

12201 Ridgedale Drive

Minnetonka, MN 55305



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
Secretary—Jill S	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...

November 5 & 19	OA Quick Steps—Rochester
November 11, 12, 13	OA Convention
November 12	Unity Intergrou Meeting



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.