



Expressions of Unity

The newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

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

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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I am becoming more of who my HP wants me to be

Working step 9 continues to teach me so much about how to show up in my relationships.

Before recovery I was an insecure people pleaser with no self-esteem. I needed other people's validation so badly that I was willing to do just about anything to get it. It did not matter whether I liked you or not, I still needed you to like me and would try to be anything you asked me to be in order to get that approval.

As a result of this, many of my step 9 amends involved apologizing for my dishonesty and lack of communication. I had to take a long hard look at my behavior patterns in relationships and found that wherever I felt victimized the most by other people is where I was working my hardest to manipulate and control other's opinions of me. This way of interacting with others is a big part of what led me to eat and in order to recover there had to be another way.

There is no way I could do this alone. I worked closely with my sponsor and asked my HP for help daily. I still cannot do this alone. I need the program, my sponsor, my fellows, and my HP just as much as ever.

Now when I am working my program I am getting better at being completely honest in relationships, showing up and being present with my loved ones, and establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries. Without making the amends I have made and without continuing to work Step 9, I would not still be abstinent today.

I still stumble and falter over my old character defects and relationship patterns, but slowly, one day at a time, I am becoming more of who my HP wants me to be for myself and others.

This is a freedom I never thought was possible for me and something I could never do alone.

For that I am so very grateful.

~Bethany S.

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.

The Twelfth Step Within Committee focuses its work on the still suffering compulsive overeater already in our rooms. Recently, the question was posed; who is this still suffering compulsive eater? When I first heard of the TSW Committee, I thought of my own journey and the many years of struggle before receiving my miracle. And from what I can tell, a primary focus has traditionally been on members in relapse. Certainly those are the people that come to mind when I think of the work of the TSW committee. But then, I heard someone say in a meeting that any and all of us can be still suffering – in one way or another. We may have the food down, but our life is still in chaos. We may have recovered on many levels, but are dealing with a new challenge, great loss, or an unyielding defect of character.

In this broader sense, it becomes even more difficult to identify the still suffering member. So how can we reach out to those individuals whom we cannot easily identify? The answer appears to me to be simply ‘showing up.’ I think of the MN State convention 2 years ago. I had recently lost my dad and at one point, while everyone else was singing & dancing to the ‘Happy’ song, I broke down crying. My friend next to me saw that I was hurting and embraced me until I felt a sense of peace flowing in. She showed up that night. She showed up at Convention and she showed up for me in that moment.

To me this means that I need to show up; at meetings, at recovery events, and anytime I am with my fellows. I need to be present in the sense of being fully engaged and to be aware that someone may need a word of encouragement, a smile, a hug, or a phone call. But, I can also be present in all areas of my life. I like to take notice of cashiers that appear to be in a bad mood or simply disengaged. I try to reach out to them by asking about their day or acknowledging that they look tired. In this way, I am carrying a message of love to the world and you never know how that might impact them.

But sometimes showing up and being fully present is difficult. I often find myself judging others – writing them off because ‘I don’t like them’ rather than actually getting to know them first. Sometimes I am more interested in what I can get out of a meeting or worse yet, sharing my ‘wisdom’ with the group. Talk about arrogance and pride! Good thing I’m in this program where I can work on those obvious defects of character!

Being fully present to life and to others for me is a journey of continuing awareness. The process has included working the steps and using the tools to find self-acceptance, recognizing that I had never formed true connection with others when I was in the food, and learning that others had feeling too (and that I was not the ‘pop-up’ with others the background in the pop-up book of life!) As I continue to abstain, using the tools and working the steps, new opportunities for growth are revealed to me. And I can honestly say that I am enjoying this journey because there are so many delightful experiences along the way.

Willingness and Lists

I am a list maker and I'm great at it.

I have different lists for different things. And I love the satisfaction of crossing off things I have accomplished. However there were always those undone things I would continue to allow to go to the bottom of my lists and sometimes onto the next list because the first one had nothing left I "wanted" or was "willing" to do. (Similar to my 8th step).

The 8th step says, "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

Years ago my sponsor had encouraged me to put the people from my 4th step that I had harmed and put them into 3 columns. The people I was "willing to make amends to", "maybe willing to make amends," and "not willing". It was tough work deciding but the harder work came in step 9. However to me, willingness is the KEY to my recovery. I was told in one of my very first meetings that if I had faith the size of a mustard seed, I could do anything. I was given a pin and enclosed was a mustard seed. They knew the courage it took to come to a meeting and they saw the willingness I had and in turn they gave me hope.

I have had an enormous amount of willingness over the last 15 years that I never knew I had, all because others have walked the path before me.

However, I found myself stuck in this place over the last 3 weeks. I went on my vacation with my family. I had a list of recovery things and a few other things I wanted to do in this beautiful and relaxing place by a lake. However having unstructured time as wonderful as it can be, is also one of my BIGGEST life hurdles. It's a love/ hate relationship. I love not "having" to do anything if I don't feel like it, but I am a routine person and I hate how much my disease knows me and very subtly rears its ugly head. That can throw me off course on its own. My head told me I wanted to, by my heart wasn't into it. So I didn't do them. And then life happened. I had an accident where I fell and broke a rib and got a severe concussion with vertigo.

Having more unstructured time, the inability to do things, having to rely on others, the more and more isolation sets in. This disease is relentless even when we are hurt.

On this list was to write an article for the newsletter because our group is sponsoring it this month, and to call my sponsor when she returned from vacation. Well guess what? The disease began to take over. I did the "non recovery" things on my list, but I was losing more and more of myself to the disease.

I got to the point where I finally remembered to seek my higher power who I choose to call God. God gave me the willingness to be willing to surrender. I have prayed that many times in the past, and although I temporarily forgot it, it has saved me once again.

Within a few days I got the willingness back to call my sponsor. I knew it would be hard but I knew it was necessary. I did not like what she suggested. I wasn't so sure I was willing to do what was being asked of me, which was to make some "lists" which became my plan of action. By the end of the call, more of my willingness returned and I surrendered to the suggestions made.

I am so grateful for still having that mustard seed of hope. The willingness came and God is guiding me. Because I am now aware of this again, I am responsible with the help of my higher power and this fellowship. The only way I can keep what I have is if I continue to diligently work my program. Every. Single. Day. I do not have the chance at staying in recovery and keeping my abstinence if I am not willing to do the footwork. For today I am willing, which is all I have anyway is today.

Michele M.

Tradition 9 opens the door.

Tradition Nine says, "OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

Unlike most other organizations, there is no top-down structure to OA. We get things done by being of service, not by exercising authority over others.

Our service is guided by the wishes and needs of those we serve, within the context of carrying the message of recovery in this spiritual program.

When we serve on an OA committee, at the group level and beyond, we are called to serve with humility, as a member among members. We are responsible to those we serve, not the other way around.

I have found this Tradition to be welcoming. It opens the door to get involved deeper in recovery--anyone can be of service when service is simply about being responsible to those we serve.

Susan C.

Why can't I just ignore the names on my list?

Writing about Step 9 is difficult for me. I am currently sitting on a Step 8 list. More accurately, a Step 8 list lives in a tote bag in the back of my closet. It is unfinished business from which I am trying to hide. I'm in recovery. I work Step 10 and make current amends as necessary, I make living amends in many areas of my life, and I have even made a few direct amends for past behavior. But whenever I see the names on the rest of the list, I start to panic.

Here is what goes through my mind: I don't know how to make direct amends to such people. I don't know if it's possible. I start to wonder if it's necessary. Life seems to be going well. I'm abstinent. I'm experiencing the gifts of the program. The promises are coming true in my life. Why can't I just move on and ignore the names on that list? They all seem to still like me just fine. Why rock the boat by bringing up the past?

I came to OA in 2013 after a 10 year relapse. I had worked the program before --- got abstinent, worked the steps with a sponsor, and experienced physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery --- but even that didn't protect me from relapsing into my disease. I don't remember making a decision to leave OA 13 years ago, but I do know that I was up to Step 8/9 when I left. And I do know that I was afraid about what Step 9 amends might look like.

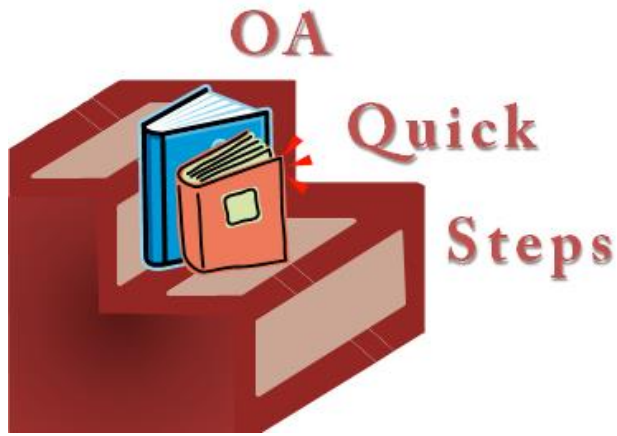
I don't want to relapse. I want recovery. And this program tells me that to get recovery I have to work the steps. I don't know how to work Step 9. Thankfully this program doesn't require me to know how to work the steps. It doesn't require me to "figure out" how to work the steps. That's why there is a fellowship. People in these rooms, who have experience working Step 9, can share their experience, strength, and hope with me. I only need to be open to their suggestions.

I don't **have** to do anything in this program. My sponsor is not **in charge** of my recovery. So I get to seek input and then make a decision about that input. I am free to choose whether or not to take the suggestions. And I am free to observe how that works for me and my recovery.

For me, each person on that Step 8 list needs to be addressed in some way. Either a direct amend, an indirect amend, a living amend, or (with the help of my sponsor) it might turn out that I don't actually owe an amend. In any case, a decision needs to be made. Why? Because my disease loves that unfinished work hiding in the back of my closet. My disease loves to find any little crack in my program and then exploit that to my detriment. Either emotionally, spiritually, or physically.

And today, I have the willingness to do what it takes to arrest my disease..

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
September 10 and 24, 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

**Ecumen Lakeshore
4002 London Road
Duluth, MN**

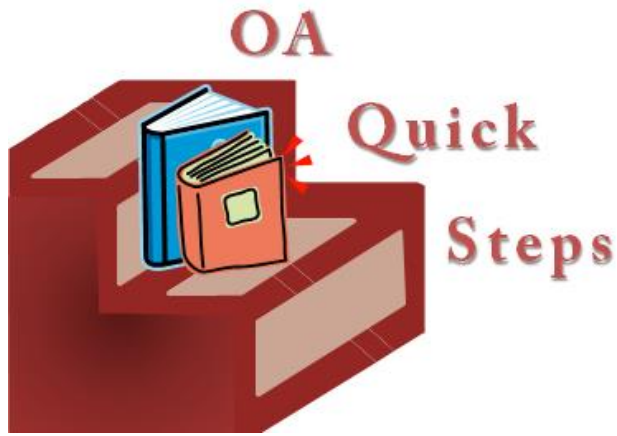
To register, contact Gene O. at 952-835-0789 or oaquicksteps@gmail.com. Registration is required as class size is limited.

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.



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October 1 and 15, 2016

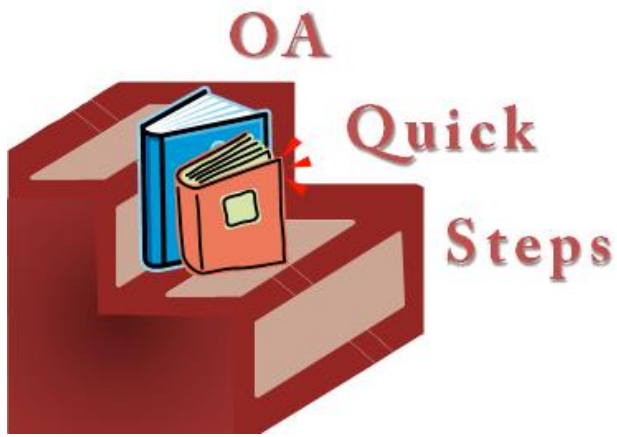
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Location

**Pilgrim Lutheran Church
3901 First Ave S
Minneapolis, MN**

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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.

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Expressions of Unity

The October *Expressions of Unity* will focus on Step Ten: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it" and will be sponsored by the Saint Cloud Saturday 9am 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 September 24th 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:

September 10, 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
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...

September 10	Unity Intergroup meeting
September 10 & 24	OA Quick Steps— Duluth
October 1 & 15	OA Quick Steps—Minneapolis
November 5 & 19	OA Quick Steps—Rochester



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.