



Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup
www.overeaters.org

News and Noteworthy

At the July Unity Intergroup meeting, a discussion took place regarding the possibility of having Unity Intergroup take a one month break in the summer. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to not meet on August 13, 2022. The next Unity Intergroup meeting will be held Saturday, September 10.

ID 810 4426 4132 /
PW 12345#

Phone: 312-626-6799
12345#

The Unity Intergroup Board will meet Sunday, August 28 at 1pm over Zoom.

Jean K.

Unity Intergroup Chair

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

For more info

contact Annette:

aplovesoa@gmail.com

New Newsletter Email

If you are interested in contributing to the monthly newsletter, please send your articles to

ExpressionsofUnity2022@gmail.com

Ruminations about August

Ever wonder why the 8th month of our calendar year is called "August"? Maybe it's a question only us Leos have pondered, but I bet most would come close. August is named in honor of Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor. But did you know that Emperor Augustus wasn't named Augustus at birth? This was an honorary title he earned after defeating Mark Antony and Cleopatra (31 BC) and later being named Roman emperor (27 BC)? Augustus, or Octavian as he was originally known, had to work for it. Just like we do in program.

What's so honorary about August? The Cambridge Dictionary defines August as "having great importance and respect in society". Someone who is *august* inspires our admiration. So, in this month of August, lets pause and reflect on our OA heroes, those that trudged this road of happy destiny before us, showed us the pathway, held our hands, and walked alongside us. Perhaps August is the perfect month to reach out, call or text, those "august" OA mentors and tell them just how inspiring they have been, how much we admire them, and to thank them for living out Step 12 in our lives.

August, for many, is a time of restoration. Those lucky enough may take the entire month to rest and rejuvenate. Others might find a few days this month to steal away and reconnect to family and nature. Why not carve out a few hours, or even days, to restore and recharge our OA program this August? Is there OA literature you'd like to dive into? Are there OA members that you've been meaning to connect, or reconnect with? Perhaps there's a 10th Step journal collecting dust, a Saturday workshop that's piqued your interest, or the realization that it's time to make your way back into that in-person meeting room? How can you let August springboard and energize your OA program?

Finally, for those of us who are educators or who have school-age children, August is a time of readiness. Show of hands for those with lengthy lists of "tools" (notebooks, pencils, scissors) to purchase? And who among us has started out clothes from last Fall to assess which ones our kiddos have outgrown? Let's

use August as a time to ready ourselves for continued success within our OA program. Are there items you need to add into your OA toolkit to sustain or supercharge your recovery? More outreach, anyone? Is it time to move onto the next step in your journey? Should you explore a new meeting to attend? Are there things you've outgrown through recovery that you're still clinging too? August is the perfect time to cast off old ideas or coping mechanisms that aren't serving you just like last year's wardrobe and find strength for the journey ahead.

Let this be a month of reflection and reconnecting with those who have had great importance in your OA journey. Let it be a month of restoration to recharge your program. And let it be a time of readiness, expanding your tool kits and preparing yourselves for the journey ahead. Why not? It's August!

~ Ronda, Chaska Thursday Virtual OA Big Book Meeting

Step 8 Principle – Self Discipline

My memories of working Step 8 in the past are many. First, it seemed like I would get to the 8th Step only to fire my sponsor, or my sponsor would let me go. It was like playing pool (billiards) and hitting the eight ball ⑧ in the corner pocket before all the balls with spots & stripes were knocked in the pockets. Game was over and my working the Steps over! My recovery was stalled. Ugh!

Thanks to the grace of my Higher Power, I got a new sponsor who worked closely with me on the Steps. She made sure I was thoroughly honest.

I was relieved to get through Steps 5-7. My sponsor wasted no time and cracked a whip! She told me to start Step 8.

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

I made a list of persons I had harmed and to whom I reasoned I would need to make amends. The list had the names of 10 people. I shared it with my sponsor.

My sponsor asked, "Where is your family?" I replied, "We are stuck with each other so there was nothing that needed to be done with them." She quickly pointed out that these individuals were very important! So, I added my dad, mom, brother, and sister to my list. My sponsor and I looked over the names of non-family members together.

My sponsor said, "You will not make amends to this guy! I don't want you to see him ever again!" I had listed a woman who had been an associate pastor at my church. My sponsor said, "You don't need to make amends to her because she was rude to you! You won't see her again." With the help of my sponsor, most of the people on the

list were eliminated. So, I had my list of 4 family members. I'm glad the list was complete.

My sponsor emphasized many times to make amends to the loved ones on my list as soon as possible! Don't delay. I made amends to each family member one person at a time.

One by one I made amends to these relatives of mine. I made living amends to my parents. I got back more than I gave. I felt at peace. I established good relationships with all. And it continues today!

It is a "we" program. I am grateful to have a sponsor guide me through Step 8. Don't go it alone. Get a sponsor who can help and guide you through all the Steps.

- Jane A. West Des Moines, IA

Region 4 Language Contest

Calling all fellows to help us give new life to some well-worn words

Prizes – Gift Cards!

Dates: May 15 – August 15, 2022

What cool action words
get you excited about
recovery?

We are looking for new
words to reframe and
give new life to →

Words to change

Retreat

(Phrase or word) - \$25 prize

Workshop

(Phrase or word) - \$25 prize

R4 Slogan

(3 – 6 words) - \$100 prize

Consider

- Excitement
- Grabs your attention
- Inviting
- Universal
- Target Demographic – Intergroups
- Next generation of OA members
- Differentiating R4 – How do we stand out
- Feel good about Region 4

Mission Statement: To actively support the Region 4 Intergroups to carry the message of recovery to compulsive eaters

Connection to the Human Experience

The 8th Step states, "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all." I started to reflect on my first Step 8 and the emotions I had while exploring my addiction history and compile a list of people and events that triggered resentment, fear and poor conduct resulting in hurting others.

I really did not think I was an addict in the true sense until I joined OA. As I started to peel the layers while doing my Step 4 and 5, I came to realize that my actions resulted in hurting others.

To become healthy, I needed to lift the burden I put upon myself and needed to do my amends so I could continue the path of recovery. I had my worksheets from Step 4 inventory, and it was now time to look at my amends. My sponsor had me get some index cards and on it list the person I had harmed and wrote out my amends. I was to deliver the amends with sincerity.

If I remember correctly, I had 16 amends to make. They ranged from parents, siblings, friends, old boyfriend, places I had worked etc. My food behaviors didn't discriminate the type of people or situations I had harmed.

I remember when I was going to make my first amends and dang it didn't go as planned. The person wasn't home, and I was upset. I wanted to get it done now. God had another plan, and that day just wasn't in the works for an amends.

Doing my Step 10 that night I had to discuss my resentment and selfishness that I felt regarding the timeline. It made me chuckle and learned to look at the process on God's highway and not my own. It took me 6 weeks to complete my amends. My sponsor encouraged me to have a timeline as she has seen people never complete them.

I was blessed in that all the people and business I had to make amends to were so sweet. I had to pay some long overdue monies to people I had stolen either money or food to feed my addiction. I remember the feeling when the last one was done.

Today I am helping a sponsee get ready to do her Step 8. It brings up memories of doing mine. What I shared with her and what I will share with the reader is that it was one of the most memorable and life changing experiences in my life. It set me free. That is why I did a Step 8 and completed it. I needed to be free of the guilt, shame, and self-loathing, so that I could work this program in a spiritual enhancing manner.

What I learned from the experience is that my addictive behavior hurt others but what I gained was a connection to the human experience. I found that people are kind, forgiving, forgetful, compassionate, and sincere. Why would someone deny this experience because of fear of the unknown?

I also learned from this experience that making amends is a lifelong action. The saying

“getter done” when harm is done to someone is so important now. Doing my daily Step 10’s keeps me current on my days thoughts and actions and I address issues right away. My personal garbage can is emptied every night to the point I don’t need to get a big dumpster.

Today when I am looking at 15 months into recovery, I realize that amends will always be part of my recovery. I have fine-tuned my approach, but the basics are still there. I need to do them to stay spiritually healthy. If I don’t, I will be back in the food.

No food is worth that. Amends helped save my life. As I write this, I have released 60 pounds. What I have released even more is the negative thoughts, behaviors and emotions that were leading me to food. I have found that my Higher Power is constant and when things aren’t going as planned it is because I have taken back the will power and put my higher power on a different highway. My Higher Power is on the interstate rather than a rural highway. My Higher Power is by me all the way on my highway. I try to not let him get too far ahead of me and not try to outpace him... rather just a nice speed limit that we both honor. Staying in my personal highway and out of others is my aspiration and having a Higher Power at my side is pretty impressive.

I tend to have a lead foot when I drive. I have learned that when looking at my higher power and need for him or her to be on the same side of the road that I need to keep my foot on the pedal on an even speed. This prevents braking and having to do some changes.

In conclusion, I encourage my OA friends to find their own highway with their Higher Power in the driver’s seat. A lot can be learned and experience when you are the passenger and let the driver get you to where you need to go.

Happy and safe travels my dear friends.

Mary B.

Amends to Myself

I have heard many say that you shouldn’t put your own name on your list of amends.

I don’t believe this as my living amend is to myself and the way that I treated my body. I work daily on believing that I am worthy, enough, and loved. I cannot be who God created me to be without having this living amends. This is also ongoing.

I believe that I will always be on my Step 8 list.

Jill R.

A Good Time Was Had by All

If you weren't at the Region 4 Convention in Omaha, you missed something special. It felt like a love fest. Everyone was so happy to be in person which meant the atmosphere was extremely happy and so friendly. It was a lovely respite for me after a challenging time.

There were three keynote speakers. I missed the last one, but the first two were excellent. We had a choice between two tracks: the Steps and workshops. I primarily attended workshops. I missed the first one, but the other three were fabulous – each in their own way. The first was on the Traditions. One take-away for me was to consider 'what is my primary purpose in this situation?' The next workshop was 'Intimacy and Sexuality.' This was a powerful workshop that got me thinking about the level of intimacy I have with others in my life – family, friends, etc. The third workshop was about professional outreach. The presenter made a dry subject interesting, getting me thinking of ways I can carry the message to professionals in my life. I was surprised that I had so many medical professionals I have or come in contact with – including in the 62+ building I just moved into. I came home with five packets of useful information from that workshop and would be happy to share with others. Call or email Unity Intergroups and they can get your information to me.

But there is good news for those who missed this convention. Unity Intergroup in partnership with the Norther Serenity Intergroup (Duluth) area will be hosting the 2024 Convention!!! We are tentatively a 'glamping' event (camping for campers and cabins for non-campers like me. We are currently looking into options. If you have any idea of locations for such an event, please call or email Unity Intergroup.

We would love for you to be a part of the planning in all ways big and small. Ask members of the Anoka group who hosted the recent Buffalo Retreat about the positive effects of working together on an event. If you are interested in helping in any way, please also contact call or email Unity Intergroup. I am starting a contact list of volunteers.

Unity Intergroup contact information:

Phone (612) 377-1600 or go to overeaters.org and click on "Contact Us" at the top or the page to send an email.

Annette P-R

The Boring Step

When asked to write an article for the “Expressions of Unity Newsletter”, I answered, “YES” with enthusiasm. Then came the humbling blow. It was suggested to be on Tradition 8 or Step 8, seeing that it is for August, the 8th month of the year. I thought to myself, why couldn’t I have a way cooler Step like Step 1? Or Step 4? However, being a published author, I took on the challenge and here I am today drafting this article a week before it’s due.

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

Well, breaking that up into several parts, I see that the first objective is to make a list. As addicts, we love lists. Food lists, to-do lists, e-mail lists, grocery lists, lists on what to pack for vacation, and on and on.

Next, I see ‘all persons we had harmed’. Hum. Harmed. That one kind of hurts. Bites a little. That is where our sponsor, fellows, and God, not necessarily in that order, are always at the ready to help. Doing our Step work is especially important. Including the boring Steps like 8.

Then comes the next objective. ‘Became willing to make amends to them all’. I am just going to elaborate on “became willing”. That’s what Step work is all about. Willingness. Willingness to change our thoughts. Willingness to change our actions. Willingness to change our attitudes. Willingness to ask for help. Willingness to meditate and to pray and reach out to our fellows. In the great big picture of things, we need to be willing. Willing to humble ourselves and accept the leadership from our Higher Power and the fellowship of other OA members. So, I have procrastinated long enough and became willing to write an article for the “Expressions of Unity Newsletter” on Step 8.

Did I mention that is a boring step? However, even in Overeaters Anonymous, we must do the boring stuff. We must do the mundane. We must do the work. But on the other side of that is the excitement of the freedom we feel. The spirituality party which we hold within ourselves. The confidence, the joy, and the ability to stand up straight, feel strong and move forward because we did a job well and continue to do it. And after all of the confetti has settled, it is once again time to do the boring stuff. Humble ourselves and help others. Be of service to others. Do God’s will. And yet, we must be still enough to hear His voice.

Hi. My name is Angel, and I am a compulsive overeater, and sugar addict. I have been abstinent for 1,042 days. I am maintaining a 103-pound weight loss. It is only because of God, my fellows and guidance of Overeaters Anonymous that I remain successful. And now to the fun part of the article:)

My gift from my higher power, after 10 months of abstinence. A God-given spiritual awakening. As I sat at my kitchen table, coming down off the high from a summer’s

long preparation for our oldest son's wedding ceremony on our farm, my head and brain had time to rest and think and be at peace. Suddenly, the words started to come. I had just enough time to grab a piece of paper and a pencil. God was giving me recovery poetry to write. My first book, titled 'Wheels Up- Grief to Peace' is all grief poetry that God gifted me after we lost our 18-year-old son, Dillon, to an UNDIAGNOSED bee sting allergy. However, it took Overeaters Anonymous and abstinence for me to get that spiral-notebook full of chicken scratch into book form. Because of the 12 Steps, including boring Step 8, I was able to make that "someday I'll write a book" wish a reality. A true gift from God.

Here is a poem. One of several that is another 'someday' book on recovery poetry. Please enjoy.

DON'T OVERTHINK

Just one clean white piece of paper is all you need.

The Big Book was given to Bob for you to read.

Step Zero is through. You're on your way. One day at a time, forever, you'll stay.

Trust in me, and remember, all you gotta do is surrender.

Your WE and ME is all you require. A relationship faithful and true, must be your desire.

I'm your dad, I'll give you everything. But your obedience to me, You shall bring

Trust in me to see you through. When life gets lifey, I'm here too.

I'll carry you in the palm of my hand. Over mountains and valleys, you'll understand

Your will is meant for me to mold. Drop the stinkin' thinking it's getting old

Step One tells you like it is. Your life's unmanageable, as is his (re: hubby)

But keep your side of the street slick and clean and on Me you must lean.

For I am the director of the show. My way is the only way for you to go.

Yes. you're at the bottom of your page, one clean white sheet of paper to set the stage.

My gift to you obedient one, these words you'll write, this book begun.

Day 307. No sugar, no cake. Could you have done it without me and not partake?

Nope never, nada, uh-uh. All the words that mean failure AHA

Share with your WE and inspire others. Get out of bed early, throwback the covers.

Times a wastin' get to work. I am the best boss, not a jerk

Don't worry about debt, for richer or poorer. You're the athlete. I'm the scorer

I'm freakin' crying, cuz' I can't believe this. God's gift to me, for you, his wish.

Faster, faster, I must write. Haven't even finished the poem to the right.

Share with people, my dear one. Your recovery story is on the run.

Don't micromanage my infinite plan. You know, I'm your God. The great I AM.

Peace to you all.

Angel from Wisconsin.

Twelfth Step Within Corner August 2022

The *Twelfth Step Within* was created to help those within the OA Fellowship who still suffer. Sad to say, I was in that boat for many years. I had not heard about the *Twelfth Step Within* until I met my sponsor who was involved in a *Twelfth Step Within Committee* for Unity Intergroup. My focus had been only on people outside OA who might benefit from our fellowship, not understanding that I wasn't carrying a good message myself since I was in and out of relapse for years. I had gone to numerous meetings, OA retreats, workshops, Big Book Studies, conventions, and met a lot of great people in the fellowship. Always with high hopes after those events that something would stick and I would put the food down and keep it down.

Well, I did not keep it down but picked it up again and again. My excuse was that there was no one at the time in my small group who had any abstinence. My sponsor suggested a novel idea. She asked me, "Why don't you bring the recovery to your group that you want?" Even though my sponsor lives in Minnesota and I live in Wisconsin, so she wasn't a part of my group, I thought at first, you've got to be joking. Me? How could I bring recovery to my group when I couldn't get abstinence myself? But after some further reflection I thought, I was awash in self-pity, and all about me. Just like in the first "Top Gun" movie when a jet went through a jet-wash they would spin out of control. Often the pilots could not recover the jet so they had to eject, or they would crash and burn. I needed to get off my pity pot and let my Higher Power have the controls. Total surrender and turn it over. Gradually, more people in our group were becoming abstinent too. Recovery was happening in our small group because someone shared with me. Someone who saw and understood my struggles not only with the food but mainly with life itself.

If there is someone that is struggling in your group, please take the time to reach out and let them know there is hope, and that OA can help, just as our Responsibility Pledge states: "Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible."

If you haven't seen someone at your meeting for a while, take time to make a phone call or a text message to let them know you miss them and available if they would like to talk. Take a minute to smile and say hi, make others feel welcome in the meetings, and be interested in what they have to share. Offer yourself in loving service by giving a ride if needed, being a sponsor, or just a listening ear. There are people hurting in the rooms of OA, and I was one of them. I thank God and OA today that I have come full circle and got off my pity pot and am able to extend my hand, my ear and most of all my heart to those in need. Will you join me and others in OA and reach out your hand and heart to the still suffering overeater? That's what the *Twelfth Step Within* is all about, and just like my sponsor I am now on the *Twelfth Step Within Committee* for Unity Intergroup as well as being a Unity Intergroup representative for my Sunday group, besides sponsoring. Service, in whatever form, is what *Twelfth Step Within* is all about.

Lori K.

Marshfield WI Sunday 6-7PM ZOOM 666-709-3882 Code 977264

Crystal MN Wednesday 1-2:30PM ZOOM 852-5851-5124 code 183246

Tradition Nine

Tradition Nine reminds me to work in partnership with my power, to consciously pray for my Higher Power's will for me and the power to carry that out. Then I can relax. The message I hear from every reading, sharing, face to face encounter (or many of them) is that God will provide. As long as I seek from that source the answer to all dilemmas. When I am working in partnership, I feel like I'm going with the flow, easy, not trying hard. Pieces of the puzzle on which I am working all of a sudden snap into place. Easy. I'm no longer trying hard to fit that Cinderella's slipper onto a foot that's too large. Each time I acknowledge this, it reinforces the idea that I AM in partnership with my Higher Power. I am not heading down tunnels that lead nowhere. I am celebrating that I have come out into the light of day once again. And knowing this and because of this, today I have enough.

Kay H.