

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup August, 2011

www.overeaters.org

Carrying the Message

Now you can read the Society Pages online every month at www.overeaters.org.

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

One of the big things that I had to overcome in making a list of all the people I had harmed was coming to grips with my own behavior. I'd looked at a lot of it in my 4th step inventory, but in step 8 I had to look at the impact that I had on others. At times I didn't want to see what I had done to other people, and it helped me to understand that there were 2 main reasons why I was looking back at the things I had done – one was to figure out who I needed to make amends to, and the second was to learn how to react to things differently. Whenever I look back honestly at my own behavior, I gain insight and a chance to grow that helps me to avoid the pitfalls of my character defects.

When it comes to the willingness to make amends, I also had some work to do. The old me, who used to cower and live life with her head bent to the trough, either haughtily ignored when she harmed others, or she made groveling apologies in an attempt to ingratiate herself. Working the steps and making amends isn't about trying to get people to like me or forgive me. I needed to be honest with others about the harm I had done them, and making amends for it is one of the things that I needed to do for my own recovery. Only by making a sincere attempt to clean up my past would I get a shot at a happiness today.

The AA 12 & 12 promises that step 8 "is the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from God" and every day I am fortunate to appreciate many gifts of the program, especially the relationships that I am capable of having today.

"Moreover, it is usually a fact that our behavior when drinking [eating] has aggravated the defects of others. We've repeatedly strained the patience of our best friends to a snapping point, and have brought out the worst in those who didn't think much of us to begin with."

Ouch! Even though I had to work my way up to Step 8 through the searching and fearless moral inventory route, I wasn't prepared for this level of ownership in creating havoc in the lives of others. Compulsive overeating had always seemed like such an innocuous behavior, at least when compared to alcohol or drug abuse. Was it really true that I had brought out the worst in others just because I had a few extra cookies when no one was looking?

And the answer is, "Yes". The facts in my case are this: whether others were looking or not, whether I was sneak eating or defiantly stuffing my face for the world to see, the primary manifestation of my emotional and spiritual illness was self-absorption, nurtured by self-pity and accompanied by the expectation that the rest of the world was responsible for my happiness. Self-absorption does not invite a view from another's perspective! So as long as I ate, I remained self-absorbed and as long as I remained self-absorbed, I suffered the "total inability to form a true partnership with another human being." (AA 12 & 12 p. 53).

The first step out of this state of dire isolation and hopelessness was putting down the food. When I quit searching for happiness in a cookie, I could begin to see and hear the words of those in recovery, starting with the Big Book and 12 and 12, and augmented by the remarkable stories of those in our rooms. Once the food was down, the instructions were clear. "...I became willing to clean house and then asked a Higher Power, God as I understood Him, to give me release, [and] my obsession to drink [eat] vanished. It was lifted right out of me." (p.63, 12 & 12)

I had approached the 8th step more than once in my 25 years in and out of OA. There were two obstacles to making a list of all those I had harmed: the first bar was the food – whenever that became front and center, step work went out the window. The second was that I couldn't get an honest and thorough list made of those I had harmed without taking some serious time in steps 6 and 7. I think they were put between 5 and 8 for a reason! The concept of humility, the central message of Step 7, had eluded me for years. I needed to see how much I had put myself at the center of the universe, expecting those around me to serve my needs. Once I realized that I had given all those around me a job description they didn't deserve, I could begin to see the many ways I had harmed them. The names from all those people on my 4th step started filling the page of my 8th step list and I no longer resented the idea that I would need to apologize for my part in many damaged relationships.

Step 8 was/is hard work – but I remained motivated by the growing freedom I felt in working these steps as though my life depends on them. Besides, someone tipped me off that the promises of the program come right after step 9 and I needed to see if completing steps 4-9 were going to result in those promises for me, too. You guessed it – the answer is YES!



~Anonymous

Carry the Message by Entertaining and Making People Laugh!!!

The Convention Entertainment
Committee is looking for people who
can

- ◆ Act
- ◆ Sing
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Play an instrument
- ◆ Make people laugh
- ◆ Help with staging, props, lighting
- ◆ OR
- ◆ Any other talent/gift that would add to the Convention's Saturday Night live entertainment.

To volunteer call
Kathie at 651-438-2680

Frontenac Retreat

Sept 16-18, 2011

Live Well, Be Well

One Day At A Time

Check out the flier online at

www overeaters.org

Reduced Rates! **Deadline: AUG 16.**

(continued from page 5)

The WSBC 2011 approved tool, ‘**Action Plan**’ definition is as follows.

“An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.

For example, a newcomer's action plan might focus on planning, shopping for and preparing food. Some members may need a regular fitness routine to improve strength and health, while others may need to set exercise limits in order to attain more balance. Some of us may need an action plan that includes time for meditation and relaxation or provides strategies for balancing work, personal interactions with family and friends, and our program. Others may need help to organize their homes; deal with their finances; and address medical, dental or mental health issues.

Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other OA tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. As we use this tool, we find that we develop a feeling of serenity and continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time.”

~World Service Trustees



“Know God, Know Peace, No God, No Peace.”



When I was deep in the disease of compulsive overeating, I also was self-centered, self-reliant and very controlling of others around me. There was no God in my life and I wanted it that way.

In fact, food was my god and it miss treated me. It lied to me and said just one piece more won't hurt. It laughed at me and said I knew you would do it again, overeat and get sick. It humiliated me and said you are not love-able.

I thought God would change my life with punishment in full, because as a child I was told that God was our heavenly Father and loves us like our earthly father. Well, my earthly father had issues, one of which was that he held grudges and he punished. I did not want anymore of that. I had no God and I had no peace of mind either.

But God had a plan for me and that plan guided me into this 12-step program, where I got to know Him. I hit my bottom, reached for help, and found a fellow who was in the OA program with the HOW concept. I needed and wanted the structure that this program gave.

This kind of structure cleared a path toward God, which lead me to know what true peace of mind is. This Higher Power does not hold grudges; He forgives and teaches forgiveness; He loves and accepts me as lovable and He is firm with justice. He is faithful.

I am learning to know God and I am already receiving peace, which is called serenity.

-Anonymous

Countdown To Connection

Convention XXXVIII – Connect To Recovery November 4, 5, and 6, 2011

Crowne Plaza Hotel
3 Appletree Square
Bloomington, MN



It's the middle of July and the heat alone could make us believe that the cold, blustery days of November are too distant for our attention. But, trust Mother Nature – and your Convention Committee! – November will be here before you know it. And by the time it arrives, we want you snug in your room at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, ready to roam the rooms of recovery, connecting with fellow compulsive overeaters, hearing and sharing messages of experience, strength and hope. There are fantastic national speakers lined up, augmented by members of our fellowship who are ready to share their stories, connect with you, whether you have 10 years, 10 months, 10 days or just a desire to stop eating compulsively.

So, with great apologies to Bill W. and the other inspired originators of the 12 steps, here are the suggested **12 steps to a successful convention experience:**

- 1.** Admit it! Convention will make a positive boost to your program and the manageability of your life.
- 2.** Believe that “There is a Solution” and the people at the Convention know it!
- 3.** Turn your convention registration in today! **Online registration is available at www.overeaters.org, or mail in the registration form** found online or at any of our OA meetings.
- 4.** Make a list of all the people you haven't seen for the last two years and think about the joy of a reconnection.
- 5.** Admit to God, yourself, and your sponsor how much you need this fellowship to get or stay abstinent, and that Convention will be a great boost to your program.
- 6.** Become entirely ready to have God, as you understand God, show up at Convention with skin on.
- 7.** Humbly approach your fellow compulsive overeaters with the recognition that they will further boost your recovery.
- 8.** Make a list of the people you know who would benefit from seeing you at Convention and be ready to invite them to join you the next time you talk with them.
- 9.** Make a direct invitation to someone you know who is still suffering, and be willing to risk rejection in the process.
- 10.** Continue to get your ducks in a row – do something today that you have been putting off so you have no last-minute excuses that were within your control.
- 11.** Seek through prayer and meditation to discern what role you can take to make this convention the best ever!
- 12.** Carry the message by contacting Sue B (763-544-2074) and volunteer your time! A myriad of opportunities remain for service before and during the convention.

Register online or by mail today! To reserve your room at the Crowne Plaza Hotel call 1-800-227-6963 by Wednesday, October 12, 2011. Mention the OA Convention and refer to GROUP MNO to receive the special \$90 rate (up to 4 in a room). For more information, see the registration form found online or at your regular OA meeting. See you there!

Convention Service Positions Available: For job descriptions call Sue B. at 763-544-2074.

- Vice Chair of the 2011 Convention, Chair of the 2012 Convention
- Volunteer Chair

ACTION PLAN

It has come to my attention that some groups are protesting the addition of the newest tool, action plan, by either omitting it or changing the language approved in the updated Tools of Recovery pamphlet.

The WSBC 2010 approved the use of a 9th tool, Action Plan. That decision was affirmed by WSBC 2011, and the new Tools of Recovery pamphlet, including the definition of action plan, was approved. Concept Two states “The OA groups have delegated to World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.” Ignoring the decision of WSBC fails to uphold the Twelve Concepts of OA Service and is not in keeping with Tradition One – Unity. Of course, Tradition Four states “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.”

Some twenty years ago a similar situation was addressed by the BOT and a statement was sent saying there should be no 'abbreviated version' of any Conference-approved literature used without going through the proper literature-approval process.

This issue stimulated much discussion among the current trustees. An official document of approved abbreviated language for the Tools does not exist. The consensus was that there is a demonstrated need for an abbreviated version of the Tools of Recovery, and that this issue goes beyond the local level. The Board Approved Literature Committee is going to look at developing an “official”, abbreviated version of the tools. When and if it is approved (the process may take a year), the document may be available on the website.

In the meantime, groups should do what group conscience dictates. Some suggestions for including the Tools in the Meeting Format are:

Read the list of the Tools and ask someone to share for one minute on one of them.

Read one or two of them from the Tools pamphlet. Highlight one or two of the tools by reading and/or sharing on those tools.

Do 2 or 3 a week so that all tools are covered in a month.

Or a group could revert back to the suggested meeting format:

TOOLS: “In OA, the Statement on Abstinence and Recovery is ‘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.’ The OA tools of recovery help us work the Steps and refrain from compulsive overeating. The **nine** tools are: a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity and service. For more information, read the Tools of Recovery pamphlet.

If a group does want to abridge (shorten, not change or redefine) OA approved literature, there is a process to request permission to do so. A group would use the usual reprint request form and specify that they are seeking to abridge the literature. They would also attach a copy of their proposed wording. Any such request to abridge a piece of Conference- or board-approved literature will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. Approval is to be granted sparingly; the request must demonstrate a compelling reason for the abridgement. If the subcommittee is unable to reach a consensus, the issue will be referred to the full Board of Trustees.

When service bodies elect delegates to WSBC, we trust that they will make decisions for OA as a whole. If we disagree with those decisions, we may submit motions to be considered at WSBC that would change that course. In the meantime, it behooves all groups to respect the service bodies that sent delegates to make those decisions on our behalf.

Finally, this once again highlights the critical importance of sending delegates to WSBC – so that groups have a voice in the decision-making process.

Please note: Please review all of your tools to see if they match the wording on the world website. Several of the tools have updated definitions; so please ensure that the most recent definition is being read at your meeting.

(continued on page 3, column 1)

Tradition 7: Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions

The spiritual principle of tradition 7 is “responsibility”. In my active addiction I was either over-responsible or under-responsible. Either I carried the weight of the world on my shoulders or I let the world carry me.

In OA we are all equal partners. Think about your home meeting. Ask yourself; do I participate fully in my home group? Do I contribute financially what I could or could I give a little more? To what service do I commit in my home group, intergroup, region, World Service? Could I do more? Am I doing too much?

When I think of tradition 7, the first thing that comes to mind is passing the basket during meetings. But it is more than that. A fully self-supporting meeting must have all service positions filled. A group that continually has open service positions is not fully self-supporting. If there are only one or two people doing the service positions the group is not self-supporting. If I assume most of the service positions in my group, I am over responsible. If I rarely accept service positions I am under-responsible.

Think about the financial aspect of tradition 7 - if my group is fully self-supporting, we can't just look at our own expenses of rent, literature etc. We must assume some responsibility for intergroup, region and World Service Offices to assure they can perform their roles. Intergroups do much that we couldn't do as individual groups. Regions undertake tasks that are larger than we could do as an intergroup, such as broader outreach to compulsive overeaters. WSO publishes literature etc. WSO has paid employees.

I present some interesting facts to ponder. My intergroup's budget is \$44,381. My region's budget is \$16,919. WSO budget is \$1,853,700. When OA was established 50 years ago the suggested donation was \$1.00. How many of us still throw \$1.00 into the basket? In 1961 a stamp cost 3 cents. A candy bar cost a nickel. A new home cost \$17,000. Gas was 25 cents per gallon. A loaf of bread was 21 cents. The median income was \$5,315/year. If an OA member attended 1 meeting a week for 52 weeks at that income, they would have given 1% of their annual income to OA.

In 2007 (the most recent figures I could find), a stamp cost 41 cents, a candy bar \$1.00, gas was \$3.00/gallon, a loaf of bread averaged \$2.75. A new home cost \$317,000. The median income was \$31,111. If an OA member earning that salary attended one meeting per week and gave 1% of their income to OA, they would be giving \$6.00 per week.

A dollar can't buy what it used to. Expenses for OA have not remained at the 1961 level either. Think about it. What if each of us gave 1% of our annual income to OA? What if we gave a responsible amount of our time in service to OA? Imagine what we could do to reach out to the still suffering compulsive overeater!

~Brenda T





There Is A Solution...

Connect To



Recovery

Overeaters Anonymous

XXXVIII MN State Convention

November 4, 5, 6, 2011

There Is A Solution...

The 2011 OA State Convention

OA Meetings

National and Local Speakers

Step and Topic Workshops

November 4, 5, & 6

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bloomington MN

Call 1-800-227-6963 or reserve [online](#)

Registration Deadline: October 21, 2011

Payment: Make checks payable to MN OA Convention 2011. No refunds will be given. Partial Scholarships available.

Contact: Julie C. with questions at 612-558-3687 or email danejulie@hotmail.com.

Send registration form and check to:

MN OA Convention 2011, PO Box 20501, Bloomington, MN 55420

Registration (please print clearly & use a separate form for quest meals or additional registrations)

Name Name tag should read

Address City/State/Zip

Volunteer Opportunities

Check appropriate box

- Decorations Greeter
- Registration Literature
- Hospitality Newcomer Host
- Timer As Needed

Please consider purchasing a lunch and dinner as this offsets the cost of our meeting rooms. Thank You.

Please place a check in the box beside your dinner choice.

Registration before 9/29	\$36 _____
Registration after 9/29	\$46 _____
Saturday Lunch	\$17 _____
Saturday Dinner	\$23 _____

Check dinner choice:

- Pork Chop Fish Chicken Vegetarian

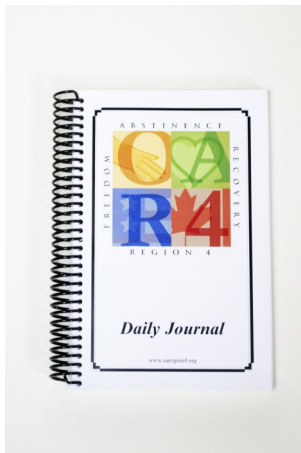
Registration for Saturday Only \$26 _____

Registration for Friday or Saturday night only \$16 _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

September Society Pages

The September Society Pages will focus on Step 9, "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." and will be sponsored by the Brooklyn Center Monday night meeting. Although one meeting 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 to Sherry M at smccrank@hotmail.com by Saturday, Aug. 20.



Region 4

Daily Journal

\$14 online at

www.oaregion4.org

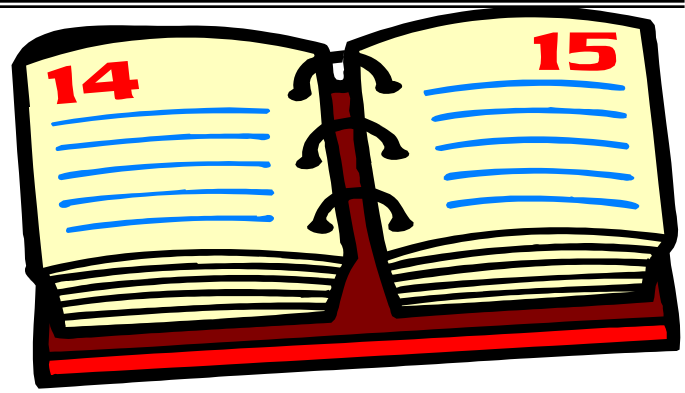
OR

\$11 at Unity Intergroup meeting (mailing is extra)

(Buy for yourself, buy for your group)

Questions: Meg 763.244.6098 or

Megunitychair@gmail.com.



Mark Your Calendar

Saturday August 13	Unity Intergroup Meeting
Saturday August 20	Newcomers Meeting Society Pages Deadline
Saturday September 3	Website Deadline
Saturday September 10	Unity Intergroup Meeting
Saturday September 17	Newcomer Meeting Society Pages Deadline
Saturday October 1	Website Deadline

More information available at www.overeaters.org

Conference Dial-in Number: (218) 339-4600

Participant Access Code: 468702#

Details of the telephone system and keypad options;

<http://www.overeaters.org/conferencing.html>

Intergroup Board

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