

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup November, 2011

www overeaters.org

Carrying the Message

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

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

Step 11 - What does it get me?

Prayer and Meditation? I'm all over it. In fact, I realize if I spent even 10% of my time that I spent on obsessing and eating food on prayer and meditation I would be the next spiritual guru to hit the planet. I can see the books, movies, speaking engagements – I'd have to pick a color for my robes. Since orange and white have been taken, maybe I could do a zebra stripe.

But...do I get that info from my HP – that His will for me is the wild glory and glamour and adoring fans for my spiritual aptitude? In fact, I'm directed away from my visions of grandeur to a more earthly focus – like be nicer to people, live within my means, be of service. It offers me the day to day workings of living a more humble life.

Being blessed with abstinence, my consciousness is continually refined, which means I am "getting it" a little more each day. I do have a pretty thick head, so it will continue to take a while. What I do know is that I'm talking to my HP more – we're getting to be pretty good buds. I'm given fabulous opportunities to be my best self. Like those people I consider obnoxious, and then all of a

sudden I need something from that particularly unbearable person. A guy I happen to work with always seems crabby, so in my mind I call him Crabby Man. Crabby Man came to my rescue the other day when I left my security badge at home. In fact he saved me a two-hour commute of having to go home and get it. He even held the door open for me to go do my job. Then later in the week, he smiled and said "Hello" to me in the hall. Oh his name is Mike.

This step is about easing out of the swirl of my own making and taking a breather to help calm my mind and spirit. It appears easy, but for me it sometimes takes a heroic effort to sit or kneel for even just five minutes and breathe. No music, TV, talking, computer, reading – just breathing in and thinking, "Help me do your Will" and breathing out, "Help me be open". I'm continually amazed at how in even this short amount of time I get a rebalanced tune-up, which presents new insights. I need to be aware of the conscious part of this, which is my responsibility. I don't just get to pray and get magic.

For today I will continue to put my Higher Power first and my circuitry will be aligned in body, mind and spirit.

~Meg

Restocking your Spiritual Toolbox

What is a spiritual toolbox? It is a set of activities that you use to connect with a power greater than yourself. For some, sitting in quiet meditation brings them to the “thin space” between self and God. When I find myself in that space, it brings great consolation and joy. But it doesn’t work every day for me. Sometimes I just have too much going on literally or in my head to reach that space. When that happens, I turn to other activities that help me connect with God.

Creating your own personal list of ways to connect with our Higher Power is a great method to start filling your spiritual tool box. Prayer and meditation is more than sitting still.

Here is a list to get you started. Choose what works for you, and don’t be afraid to try something new.

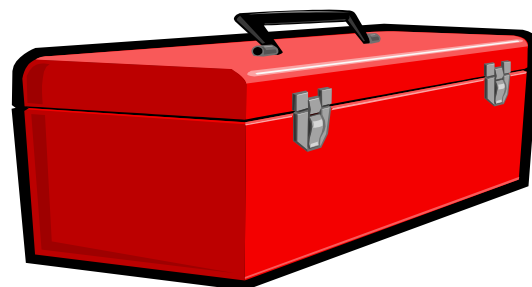
- ★ Exercise. God created us with the ability to move, no matter how limited that may be for a person—go for a walk, swim, golf, yoga, stretch. Walking alone helps me to quiet my mind in order to listen for the voice of God. Walking with a friend often gives me insights that I credit HP for gifting me.
- ★ Reading uplifting books, including OA literature
- ★ Listening to music. Music speaks to the soul like nothing else can. Choose your favorite genre. The joy you experience while listening is a way of thanking HP for your life.
- ★ Prayer. Sometimes prayers from a book or rote prayers I’ve memorized say what I cannot put into words myself. Or make up your own prayer, have a conversation. Sometimes I just need to have a good talk with God; to share my concerns, questions, emotions, etc.
- ★ Going out with friends
- ★ Journaling. Try writing a dialogue with God, writing your part with your dominant hand and then writing a response with your non-

dominant hand.

- ★ If you belong to a religious affiliation, attend services
- ★ Soak up God’s love in a warm bath or let God’s love rain down on you in the shower
- ★ Knitting or other crafts. Activities that don’t require a lot of thought process quiet the mind enough to hear Higher Power’s whisper of insight.
- ★ Playing with your dog or cat
- ★ Play. Create a collage, play with play-dough and blow bubbles. Whatever makes you smile makes God smile too.

Your list of ways to connect with your Higher Power is only limited to your imagination. When you run out of ideas, ask God for more suggestions.

~Brenda T



Meeting Updates

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| New Meeting: | Hastings HOW format
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
615 Vermillion St
Hastings, MN
6:30 PM Sheri – 651.315.2910 |
| Moved: | Brooklyn Center moved to
Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
4200 Lake Road
Robbinsdale, MN
7:00 PM Carolyn – 763.475.103 |
| Interested?? | Downtown Minneapolis during the day
RebeccaF.OA@gmail.com |
| Disbanded: | Apple Valley – Sat 9AM
Isanti – Thu 7 PM |

DO YOU KNOW YOUR OA (DYKYO)

Intergroup

Take this little quiz to see how much you know your OA? Take it to your group and see how well you do.

1. What is the name of our Intergroup?
2. What is our Intergroup's website?
3. How many groups do we have in our Intergroup?
4. How many reps per group have a vote at the Intergroup meetings?
5. When does the Intergroup meet?
6. The name of our Intergroup website is?
7. What is the name of the building we meet in?
8. What is the minimum amount of abstinence a board member must have? _____ months
9. Month the MN State Convention is in?
10. On the website, what 'section' holds the minutes, agendas and treasury reports?

Answer Key: 1) Unity 2) www.overeaters.org 3) 68 4) 25 5) 2nd Saturday 6) Society Pages 7) Summer Library 8) 6 9) Nov 10) Business

Service Menu Items

These sample items will enhance your program plan.
Try one of these delectable service positions that reach out beyond the group level.

Every January we elect up to 39 people to keep our Intergroup fabulous, sparking, rootin' tootin' and happenin'!

Step right up and check us out.
Visit the Nov and Dec meeting to see what it's all about.

Grab a friend or two - help make a difference

There is still time to determine what interesting and fulfilling role you can learn and grow, while sharing experience, strength and hope. Elections are in January.

- Chair • Vice Chair • Secretary • Treasurer
- Registrar • Newsletter Editor • Outreach Chair
- Public Information Chair • Literature Coordinator • Region Reps (Up to 7 + 1 Alternate)
- World Delegates (Up to 5) • Twelve Step Within Chair • Teleconference Coordinator
- Print Coordinator • Web Coordinator • Email and Events Coordinator
- Mail Coordinator • Bylaws Chair • Big Book Study Chair
- Retreat Chairs (Buffalo and Frontenac) • Newcomer Meeting Coordinator
- Anoka Treatment Center • Hot Line Coordinator • Virtual Speaker Coordinator
- Sponsorship Workshop Coordinator (2) • Convention Chair

There are also many other fabulous opportunities to help out by sitting at a booth at an event, answering the phone, helping with retreats, writing an article, speaking at events and Newcomer meeting

Step 11

I never used to pray. I pretty much asked or told God what I was wanting Him to do for me. And to be honest it was never really "God, bless my life and family" it was more like "God, I need you/you have to get me (insert any situation that any of my addictions have gotten me into) out of this. If you do this for me I will never put myself in this situation again." It almost always ended up being more bargaining with God than anything.

And I don't know about your higher power, but mine doesn't make deals. It doesn't sway His decision to work a miracle for me because I say that I promise to go to church every Sunday. Over the years, working the steps have helped me be able to have that closer relationship with God and to actually be able to pray for His guidance and His will for me. I no longer have to bargain with Him or only reach out to him in desperation. To know that He is always there for me, even when it takes me a few seconds to remember that.

I can't say that I'm perfect and turn to prayer as my first defense mechanism. But when those emotions that I can so quickly make irrational start to creep up and take over, it only takes seconds to be able to step back and realize I'm not ever alone in this big world. Versus before when I hardly ever realized it because my mind was blocked with the illusion that I was an independent woman who could take care of my own problems and didn't need anyone's help. Not even God I guess. Really?! Who was I fooling? No one but myself. Thank God that the other steps make it possible for my mind to be opened and clear enough to work Step 11 in the true fashion it deserves to be.

~Amanda

SEND IT IN!!

What cool things is your group doing? We'd like to publish your ideas in the next two issues of Society Pages.

- ★ How do you greet your newcomers?
- ★ How do you get the word out?
- ★ How does your group keep your wonderful members engaged in working the steps, coming to the meeting, having a group conscience meeting?
- ★ Send your awesome info to Meg at MegUnityChair@gmail.com

Who Has Time For Prayer & Meditation?

I am a person who rarely stops moving. I am involved in all sorts of service, in my OA meetings, Intergroup, and at the Region level. I also give lots of service at my church and other non-profit organizations. I rarely sit and watch TV. A night out at the movies is unusual too. Shopping is something I do when I need something, not just for amusement. I am married with three kids (all in college or beyond) and one grandchild I am blessed to babysit now and then. Did I mention I work full time and have a part-time job on the side?

I am a very busy person. Who has time for prayer and meditation? I do! I must or my program will suffer and I will die! Maybe not today or tomorrow, but this disease will kill me. Some people set aside time in the morning, and I think that is wonderful—probably the best way to do it. I, however, am up at 5:30 am, exercise, then off to work by 8:00.

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Since I was probably working until 11 the night before, I have a hard time getting up any earlier for meditation and prayer. Therefore, I fit my prayer and meditation in a little bit, here and there, throughout the day. I do this in the car, before I eat, and I read my daily meditation emails and Big Book Buddy Quote email quick before I get to work. I try to remember to pray throughout the day too. There are always things to be grateful for that I can express to God (even seemingly little things like a hot shower or good tea), and to ask for help in the difficult times. I pray for knowledge of His will and understanding, which helps me get through each day—especially the challenging days. I am busy serving God, and that's

what I'm best at right now at this time in my life. I think God understands and helps me remember Him throughout the day.

I have been in OA since March 2006, and abstinent since April of 2008 (Buffalo Retreat). I have been blessed with a 100 pound weight loss that I have kept off for nearly three years. I never want to go back to the way I used to be—physically or mentally. Life was unmanageable! I need Step 11, as well as the other steps and my Higher Power, to keep my program strong. One day at a time.

-Julie,

Why Being a Unity Intergroup Representative ROCKS...



- Get to hear all of the exciting information first hand – for all levels of OA
- Meet people from all different groups and meeting formats. Helps me learn about OA in a broader context.
- Fun to meet and see my OA friends
- Insurance against a possible slip
- Can carry the message in a BIG way to those who still suffer
- Get tons of hugs, smiles and good words
- Good practice of “Principles before Personalities”
- Be ambassador to your OA meeting by offering opportunities for hope, recovery and service
- Part of the largest Intergroup in Region 4 (8 states and part of Canada)
- Up to 7 representatives can go to the Region 4 Assemblies – funded by Unity
- Up to 5 delegates can go to the WSBC in New Mexico – funded by Unity
- Can fulfill at least 4 tools in one sitting: Action Plan, Meetings, Service, Telephone
- I get to see the Traditions in action
- I get to be/remain abstinent for 2 hours
- You can eat your lunch during the meeting

Rooted in Mud

Through step 11 we continue to build a relationship with God/HP. In any relationship we have, whether it is with our Higher Power or with another person, it is important to spend time with them on a regular basis. If I rarely take the time to invest in my friendship with someone, that relationship is not very likely to grow deeper and may wither away completely. The same is true with God. I need to spend time with God daily.

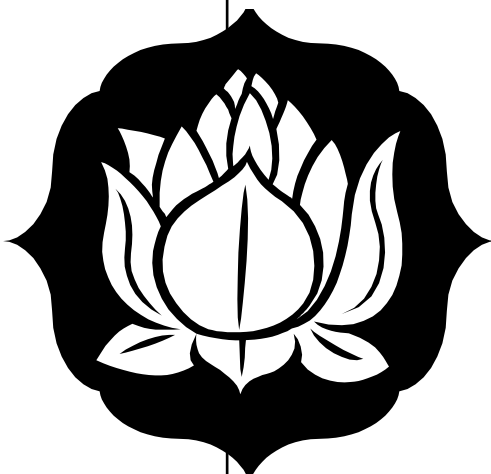
When I was in the depths of my food addiction, I had wandered away from this relationship. I was so caught up in finding my next “fix” that I didn’t have time or energy to be present to God or anyone else. I lost touch with God and as I entered into treatment I was deeply saddened that I didn’t have a personal relationship with God anymore. It is similar to those who are in a committed monogamous relationship who focus all their energy and time on their children or other commitments and wake up one day and realize they don’t really know who their partner is anymore.

Communication is key. Prayer and meditation are the way we communicate with our Higher Power. I may talk silently or out loud, write poetry, journal my thoughts, sing, dance, or other creative expressions. We must also take the time to listen. When I am able, I sit quietly. I might focus on a candle, or more likely on my sun lamp-

imaging it as the light of the love of God. For those times when I cannot sit still, one of my favorite ways of focusing is through Tai Chi (for arthritis). It is slow and gentle and I tune all else out. It quiets my mind and body to be able to hear God speak. God often forgets that my spiritual ears are a bit hard of hearing. It helps to get my attention first.

When I pray for my self and others, I tend not to ask for specific things. I have learned that to do so tends to tempt me to hop back in the director’s chair, barking directions at God. Instead I bring the situation or the person I am praying about to God and ask God to give me/ the person I am praying for, the graces that I/they need today. This is also where “praying for the knowledge of God’s will for me and the power to carry that out” come into my prayer.

My prayer “tool kit” consists of these communication skills, the Big Book, my 12 step daily meditation books, my Recovery Bible, “You Are Sent” which is my community’s constitution – my guide for living religious life, my journal and pens, and 12 step prayers. Sometimes I throw in instrumental music and a candle to set the ambiance. Always I pray when I can take an uninterrupted period of quiet time, and throughout the day, I pause to “check in” with God to learn “what is the next right thing to do.” At



night, I use the Big Book to review my day through step 10.

An image has developed for me at this time in my spiritual life. That image is the lotus flower. I looked up information about lotus flowers because I was curious to learn more about them. The lotus has its roots in the mud. It cannot grow without the mud and yet its petals are pristine.... The lotus flower doesn't turn mud into anything. Mud is mud. Yet mud also has nutrients needed to aid in the flower's growth.

It is the same for us. I am in a situation that I don't particularly cherish-having an addiction. I am in the mud. I cannot be separated from the mud of my addiction or I will not continue to grow and thrive. It has become a part of who I am. I would not have the relationship that I have with God now were it not for my addiction to sugar. Certainly I would have one, but it would not be filled with the graces I have received because of my addiction and my recovery in OA. My relationship with God, through my addiction, has placed me in a position of knowing my powerlessness-my poverty- my total reliance on God.

My addiction is the mud; the petals of the lotus represent my whole being reaching out to my Higher Power with gratitude. As long as I remain connected to God, I remain alive. The stem of the lotus flower is very fibrous and though it can be bent many times, it cannot easily be broken. Though I have been bent because of my addiction and the choices that I have made that bruise my relationship with God and others, I cannot be broken. My spirit remains intact.

~Brenda T

WELCOME to the 38th MN State OA Convention

The Convention Steering Committee would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 38th Minnesota State OA Convention.

For 38 years OA members have traveled from near and far to **“Connect to Recovery”** and share their experience, strength and hope with each other.

We have taken great care in planning every single convention detail with you in mind. We hope you will be inspired by our two keynote speakers and more than 30 local speakers, delight in our delicious abstinent meals and enjoy fellowship in our Hospitality Room. Don't forget to stop by the Unity Intergroup and Literature Tables to see the new Region 4 Journals, “Connect to Recovery” refrigerator magnets, literature and Intergroup news.

A special thank you to the 200 volunteers who made this weekend possible; especially the convention boosters who cheered us on every week at their meetings.

We are grateful for your service and that you were willing to reach out your hand to share recovery with your fellows.

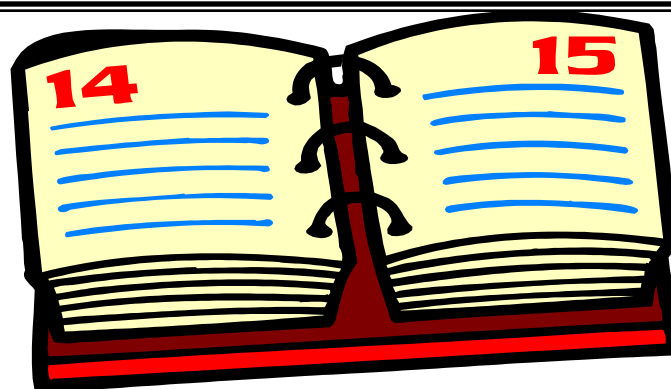
Yours in Unity, Recovery & Service,

*The 2011 MN State OA
Convention Steering Committee*

December Society Pages

The December Society Pages will focus on Step 12, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry out this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs." and will be sponsored by the Anoka 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, November 19 . Thanks!.



Mark Your Calendar

Fri, Sat, Sun November 4,5,6	Convention
Saturday November 12	Unity intergroup Meeting
Saturday November 19	Newcomer Meeting
Saturday December 3	Website Deadline
Saturday December 10	Unity Intergroup Meeting
Saturday December 17	Society Pages 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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