

MAY 2017

OA TODAY

OA ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERGROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS:

****No Intergroup Meeting in May.**

****Intergroup meets Sunday, June 11, 1:30 p.m., Missouri Baptist Hospital, Auditorium area. Intergroup representatives and those in service positions expected; everyone welcome.**

OA SURVEY -- PLEASE HELP US BETTER SERVE YOU!

The membership survey has been extended. There are only 10 questions, so it will take 2-3 minutes. Go to stlouisoa.org and click on the button that says "Take Survey" -- it's that easy! The password is 'bistate'.

JUNE SUPER SATURDY

Stepping into the Summer

(All Steps will be Covered!)

When: June 17, 2017

Where: Webster Groves Christian Church

1320 W. Lockwood Ave

Oakland, MO 63122

(in Fellowship Hall, use rear entrance, handicap accessible)

Registration 9 a.m.

Program 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Contact: Carol H. 314-961-7253

STEP FIVE

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

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE?

I don't know about you, but the thought that I am going to “admit” something...anything... sounds pretty negative – and scary. Take that further, when considering Step 5 and its directive to “admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs,” and I get near panic mode.

As an addict, I have spent my life covering up – hiding my addiction, my crazy food behaviors, and the resultant shame – from everyone...my family, my closest friends, even my therapist. When Step 5 challenges me to “admit” my wrongs, everything inside screams, “No – are you out of your mind?”

Somehow, though, after watching so many brave OA friends take this step and reassure me that in admitting my flaws, failures, and wrongdoings, I will find not judgment and scorn but love, understanding, even relief, I am compelled - and I move forward into another frightening yet necessary place.

When sharing my Fifth Step, I was astounded at the level of compassion and empathy I received from the person on the other side of the table. Instead of looking at me with disdain and disappointment as I feared, this person shared an understanding of the brokenness that we all bring to this program...and to life in general.

Step Five is amazingly cathartic. Yes, it's daunting to think about opening up these old wounds and exposing them to another person...but in doing so we find healing, compassion, empathy, and belonging. At the end of the day, isn't that what we're all looking for, what we came to OA for in the first place?

Each time I stand in the circle of friends at the end of an OA meeting and recite those words out loud – “...as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams,” I have a little catch in my throat. I have finally found what I've been looking for all along – a place to belong. I am home...and so are you. Step boldly forward into “admittance” – you'll be glad you did.

Linda

HOW DOES STEP 5 WORK?

I decided to take my first Step 5 with my sponsor, who I trusted to be impartial, patient, kind, and respectful of my anonymity. (I had no idea exactly how much I would rely on these values during my 5th Step.) My sponsor and I were in different states at the time, and she happily offered to drive several hours to meet me in the middle and spend her summer weekend in a hotel room listening to my 5th Step. I felt humbled and deeply grateful.

I wasn't sure what to expect, except that I would read aloud (yikes!) my 4th Step inventory to her. I felt nervous that I had not read (and of course edited) what I was about to share with my sponsor. In retrospect, I am grateful that when I read my inventory, aloud to my sponsor, I was reading it aloud to myself for the first time. The 5th Step felt awkward at times, uncomfortable, and revealing, but my sponsor's patience, attentiveness, and lack of judgment calmed my nerves. As I read, I began to notice trends in my behavior. Each resentment and fear began to feel more and more like déjà-vu; the names and places changed, but everything else seemed to stay the same. This process helped me identify the recurring harmful thoughts and behaviors that were preventing me from living in freedom, joy, and peace.

After several hours on Saturday, and most of the morning on Sunday, I had read my two full spiral notebooks of my 4th Step inventory. Done! I will be forever grateful for the patience and attentiveness that my sponsor gave me in listening to my inventory. I experienced a level of service and love that I had never witnessed before in OA.

As I drove home that weekend, I began to experience a sense of freedom. There was nothing to hide anymore, nothing to be ashamed of. I had told someone all of my deepest, darkest secrets, and she didn't act the least bit surprised. The disease of compulsive overeating had been trying to isolate me in shame, fear, and resentment. Step 5 broke these chains of isolation and proved the disease wrong: I am not too difficult or too “much”; I am one of God's children – imperfect but loved, not the worst, and not the best, just one of. Step 5 was key to helping me believe these truths rather than the lies the disease had been telling me.

The gift of Step 5 continues to unwrap itself in my daily life and all of my relationships. It is now easier to admit how I really feel, to admit my imperfections to myself, God, and others, and to realize again that no matter how many mistakes I make, a Power greater than myself is working out something good here, I just need to stick with it.

Anonymous

TRADITION FIVE

“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the overeater who still suffers.”

WHAT DOES THIS TRADITION MEAN?

When I first came to OA, I was very much a complicated person – all of it by my own doing – who responded to uncertainty, frustration, resentment and fear by overeating. When I came to my very first OA meeting, however, the message stayed very much on target with two of the four members present, sharing succinctly how they got over compulsive overeating which, by their visible appearance, all of them seemed to have. Even though their stories were different, the message was still pure: how to use the tools and steps to change their lives. My ego can so easily get me off track by sharing on my non-program accomplishments and disappointments in life. This is nothing more than a drunkalogue in reverse if I’m not sharing succinctly the process by which I’ve gained relief; i.e., faith in a higher power to provide me with the necessary guidance along with service to others. I’ve only learned this process and only keep the miracle when I show up at meetings; first to learn how others gained results and, later, to share that miracle. It is so easy to get off track and obsess over circumstances in life that did not turn out how I expected them to. That, inevitably, led me back to the food. But what I hear at meetings is how others are using the steps to tackle the challenges in life.

Neither is the focus solely on carrying the message to someone who has just walked into our rooms. Many amongst us suffer a long time after achieving physical abstinence and attempt to hid our frustrations by exhibiting false cheerfulness; God forbid we should admit such foibles to the group. Ultimately, however, someone would share something that is spot on. Yes, I know what it is like to suffer both before and after coming to these rooms. Because our groups focus solely on carrying this miraculous message, however, we provide a venue for anyone to get well without excuse for argumentation and denial over other issues that are not OA. I have tools and steps today to resolve all of my personal dilemmas and gain that by listening to others share about how they work the steps; not by anyone giving abstract advice not embodied in the tools and steps. That can, indeed, be shared outside of the rooms but should not be a topic as the strong risk exists that someone still suffering will not identify and flee before the miracle happens. Thanks you for ~~May God Bless!~~ to share on this.

Bob L

FROM THE ARCHIVES: HOW DOES THE TRADITION WORK?

My sponsor continually encourages me to look for and expect miracles in my everyday life. At first I was skeptical, but she’s right. Living in recovery means a life “beyond my wildest dreams.” These miracles come in the most unlikely places. Tradition 5 in the OA 12 & 12 says that “...when we concentrate on carrying the message of hope to others, we are empowered to use our unique talents in ways that are truly useful to others. The result is better than any outcome we could have planned for ourselves, for we find a deep satisfaction...” That has been my experience. Who knew that feeling worthwhile, useful, and connected could feel better than compulsive eating? Recovery has taught me that – and I don’t want to ever go back to disease behaviors.

I have so many opportunities “to carry the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.” Even if there isn’t a newcomer at a meeting to talk with, there are long-time members who still suffer. When someone is in relapse or struggling, helping that person is also the group’s primary purpose. Just like “Our invitation to You” says, “It’s our weakness, not our strength that binds us together.” I finally get why our group’s primary purpose is to carry the message to those who still suffer. It doesn’t matter how long I have been abstinent, I still need to hear the message, and I can’t keep it unless I give it away. I am so grateful for this brilliant program! It works when we work it!

ANONYMOUS

God GRANT ME THE *serenity*
TO ACCEPT THINGS I CAN NOT CHANGE,
THE *courage* TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,
AND THE *wisdom* TO KNOW
THE DIFFERENCE.

VICTORY IN PROGRAM

HONESTY AND ME:

In the OA 12&12, it states "Honesty is a key factor in our recovery from compulsive eating, and so we will want to develop this trait. The best way to do so is to continue working the twelve steps." I always considered myself an honest person. My parents instilled this in me. But as I have become a member of OA and learned the principles of the 12 steps, I realize how much I have lied to the most important person: myself. I have spent years stuffing down those feelings that were too hard to feel or too scary to face. Or things that my family did not discuss. There was that little girl part of myself that was still hiding and didn't know how to come out and face the truth. Lately, that little girl is realizing that isolating and trying to do everything on her own is not the answer. Reaching out and using the steps is the way to recovery and growth. Being honest with my fellow OA'ers in meetings and making phone calls eases the fear that I think being in the food makes worse. Using the steps and sharing my feelings is leading me out of the darkness of the food. This reinforces what we are always hearing - "One day at a time."

Hugs to All. I could not do this alone.

Cindy J.

FIFTH STEP PRAYER:

Higher Power, my inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to You. Assure me and be with me in this step, for without this step I can-not progress in my recovery. With Your help, I can do this, and I will do it.

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www.oaregion4.org (Region 4 Website)
www.oa.org (World Service Website)

PRINCIPLE OF STEP 5

I am not sure if other newcomers coming to OA had a "Danger-Danger" alarm go off when reading Steps 4 and 5 for the first time, but I did. : "Uh-oh" I thought. "This may be a dangerous cult."

I had grown up in a family setting that included strict adherence to a religion that told me repeatedly that I was unworthy. I heard that I'd best scrutinize my life daily to find my own wickedness and ask forgiveness for it or I would really be in trouble - not just now - forever! The idea of performing a searching and fearless moral inventory and then admitting to God, myself, and another human being the EXACT nature of my wrongs did not sound like something I wanted to be part of. My life had been much happier since giving up the constant self-criticism of my youth, and I did not want to go back. But in desperation, I had come to OA and found a sponsor. She helped me formally work the first three steps and then gave me homework for Step 4 and described ways she had participated in Step 5 with previous sponsees. I shared with her the fears that I had that these Steps would take me back to feelings of unworthiness and hopelessness about my ability to measure up.

My sponsor called to my attention that Step Four was about facing the whole truth about myself, that a searching inventory includes what's worth celebrating and saving, not just what smells and needs pitched. Then she reassured me that she had never walked out on a person sharing a Step 5 yet, that her whole purpose was to be God's loving ears and arms as she received my truth. That was a promise that she kept to me, and I will always be grateful for my holy Step 5 sessions with her. (Yes, it took more than one.)

I've noticed that if I am not truthful about my life, I start to feel temptation to eat over what I am hiding. I begin each morning by admitting that I am still a compulsive eater and need the help of others. When considering whether to eat a certain food, I sometimes ask myself, "Would I be comfortable telling my sponsor that I ate this?" If I do not want to be honest about my food, then perhaps I am off my food plan or moving toward relapse. I have discovered that the principle of Step Five, integrity, is essential to recovery and must be part of my daily life.

Anonymous