

JUNE 2010



Easy Does It



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Intergroup Website:
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CONTENTS:

Page 1

~Step 6 & Tradition 6

Page 2

~I put my hand out...

~Intergroup News & Events

Page 3

~Trying or Willing?

~Rational or Rationalizing?

Page 4

~ Step 6 Reading

~God doing for me

**PLEASE BE SURE THERE
ARE BIG BOOK STUDY
BROCHURES
AVAILABLE AND
CIRCULATING AT YOUR
MEETINGS!!!! THANKS!**

NEXT INTERGROUP
MEETING –

Mount Olive Church
110 N Whitney Way
(at Langlois St.)

**PLEASE NOTE, JUNE
MEETING**

POSTPONED TO

NEXT WEEK:

June 10, 2010,

July 1, 2010

6:15 pm

WRITE FOR EDI

~We'd love to hear from
you, please share your
experience strength and
hope!

The EDI is always in need
of personal stories or
artwork. Email or snail-
mail the EDI editor at
caspoohbear@aol.com

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Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

At first glance, step six was a no-brainer for me. Before working the steps with my sponsor, I thought my weight was my major defect and I'd been ready for years to get rid of the excess pounds. But working steps one through five clearly showed me that my weight (a direct result of my eating behaviors) was only a symptom of "deeper issues". In the Big Book these issues are referred to as *character defects* and, at the start of step six, I thought I was more than entirely ready to be rid of them. In fact, my fourth step work had shown me that I've got quite a perfectionist streak and really – what perfectionist wants to claim anything defective, much less aspects of their character?

So imagine my surprise when I discovered that in the beginning of working step six I wasn't *entirely* ready to give up some of my defects of character! If I was honest, I had to admit that I wanted the difficulties my defects caused me removed, but the defects themselves...well, I was kind of used to them. In fact, some of them felt part and parcel of me. Take my perfectionism, for example. Sure, it caused me difficulties – I was never satisfied with what I had, I offended and alienated others, I isolated because no one could meet my unrealistic expectations, and I ate to assuage the feelings of loneliness I naturally felt in such an isolated life – but I also felt better about myself by pointing out how "wrong" others were. I have to admit it felt good to feel better than others, especially when I felt so bad about myself. And if this was how I compensated for my low self-esteem for so many years, how was I going to feel good about myself otherwise? Honestly, I hadn't a clue – and that was terrifying for me. From this angle, I wasn't inclined to give up my perfectionism too quickly...

That's when my sponsor helped me to see how strongly my character defects are rooted in FEAR. As I became more aware of how fear ruled my behaviors, and how bad I felt acting out of my character defects, I became more willing to change. In the Big Book it says, "If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing" (p. 76:1). The character defect is removed by God – I don't have to do that work. My only work is to become willing to let go, and God even helps me with this by giving me great OA tools with which to work. For me, my sponsor, meetings, and writing were particularly helpful. My sponsor suggested journaling with these questions about each of my fears:

- **Why am I holding on to this fear?**
- **What are the good things I'm missing out on because of this fear?**
- **What am I protecting myself from with this fear?**

As I wrote about my fears, they lost their power over me. This took a lot longer than I expected, but eventually I made my sixth step - and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Awareness. Willingness. Letting Go.

Simple, but not easy...and totally worth it!

~EM

Tradition 6: An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

I put my hand out...

JOURNALING

SUGGESTION (Please consider sending what you write to the EDI):

How I got past Step 3.

OR Why I just can't seem to get past Step 3.

OR "Nine is Fine!" OR Try some of EM's sponsor's suggestions from page 1.

WE NEED YOU!

There are still a lot of service opportunities to help plan and prepare for the **Big Book Study** in July. **PLANNING MEETING SATURDAY JUNE 19th, 2:00PM Verona area.** If you'd like to help now or at the event please call Jane G. 608-661-8091 or email Cassidy (caspoohbear@aol.com) for details.

Intergroup has sample press releases. If you'd like a way to notify outlying papers about your meetings, contact intergroup and request the press release.

The Big Book study workshop is only about 6 weeks away. Have you registered yet? Let me know if you still need fliers for your meeting.
caspoohbear@aol.com

Follow this link to the speakers from Region V 2006 convention!

http://region5oa.org/wordpress/?page_id=48

Intergroup is looking for donations of door prizes and raffle items (gift baskets, literature, recovery items, etc.) for the Big Book Study. If your group can donate something, please bring/send it to the next intergroup meeting or to the Big Book Study. THANKS!



Upcoming Events

- **PLEASE ANNOUNCE THIS AT YOUR MEETINGS!**

Madison Area Intergroup Big Book Study

Workshop (Madison) Friday, July 23-Sunday July 25th, 2010

Register now for a free study edition copy of the Big

Book. Brochure is on the website to download. See your intergroup rep or the website for more info. In addition to great recovery material, you'll have a chance to buy or win awesome recovery "bling" www.oamadison.org

- **June 19 Chicago, Illinois:** Turning Point Intergroup, "A Gathering of Men in Recovery," 2:00-3:30 p.m., Swedish Covenant Hospital, Anderson Pavilion, 2751 West Winona (at California, one block South of Foster); Steve 773-274-3681
- **Now Playing- 50 Years of OA Recovery WSO Convention:** August 26-29, 2010 Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel Los Angeles, CA <http://www.oa.org/world-service/convention.php>
- **WELCOME BACK! WELCOME HOME!** Sinsinawa Mound Retreat Center (yes, really, hence Welcome Back!) **Saturday and Sunday, September 25- 26, 2010. Contact CASPOOHBEAR@AOL.COM for flyer or call Lori 260-341-8971**
- **REGION III Presents: "Recovery at Sea" :** Welcome Aboard, All OA'ers for a 7-Night Cruise **7 Night Cruise on Carnival CONQUEST Galveston - Montego Bay - Grand Cayman - Cozumel – Galveston March 20-27, 2011 oaregion3cruise@oaregion3.org**

Trying and Willing – what's the difference?

I'm a "trying" expert. I "try" to *make* myself be serene. I "try" to *make* myself be abstinent. I "try to *make* myself have a spiritual awakening so I get all the recovery goodies and graduate. I "try" to not have a problem with food. I "try" daily to *make* my life look like I think it's supposed to in recovery. And you know what? *I'm worn out*. I'm finally aware that "try" is simply three letters meaning "CONTROL". And control is not recovery. Control is self-will. I never quite feel that presence of God when I'm "trying". Trying involves strain, pushing, force and a some level I am being violent with myself. Oh, yes. My violence is honed from decades of silently ripping myself to shreds for how I ate, how I looked, how I acted in the past/present/future. And you know what? I'm worn out with this too. Thank God! I now have a clear picture of what I don't want to do anymore. I don't want to "try". I heard once that a relationship with God is like being in a rowboat with my Higher Power. I can either have a hand on the tiller, but God won't row, or I can row with God's hand on the tiller. My choice. The scenery isn't great just sitting there with my hand on the tiller. That leaves "willing", which is related to acceptance and surrender. Last fall I was slipping a lot and my sponsor asked me to call people and ask them about surrender. Most responses had the same thread – they'd had a spiritual experience that freed them from overeating. Some got through it working the steps, some got it from prayer, and some got it from getting free of the food. And I still didn't understand what they meant. I was straining to surrender. I didn't know that straining to surrender was putting the cart before the horse.

Acceptance of myself as a compulsive overeater comes *before* surrender. And I can't "try" to make acceptance happen.

God quietly showed me that I still did not accept the fact that I am bio-chemically different from normal eaters. I always will be. As long I hand onto the delusion that my eating is a moral issue, I "try" to fix myself and straighten out. This awareness is seeping in slowly and gently. I'm not happy about this awareness. And I'm so weary of the excuse du jour to overeat. Ironically, it's the incredible consistency of the results of overeating that has moved me into acceptance. I ALWAYS end up overeating. This is a bio-chemical problem with emotional/spiritual/physical consequences.

When I'm abstinent and work the steps and use the tools, my life smoothes out. Life feels easier. Anxiety subsides, as do my thoughts of food. The light and color of my days goes up several notches. Acceptance, like abstinence and serenity, is a gift from my Higher Power. There are things I do to allow the gift to get in, but I don't create the gift. I have had to live my way to this moment. So, if you are "trying", go for it! Wear yourself out! Keep at it until you're sick of it. God and the fellowship of OA are right there with you, as they've been for me.

~Gratefully, D.R. (Reprinted from Society Pages of Unity Intergroup, June 2008)

Rationalizing or Being Rational?

I am always ready to admit that I'm powerless over food- I too often forget my powerlessness when I'm faced with a decision to eat or not to eat. Too often I choose to eat that first compulsive bite based on "good reasons" that are really convenient lies: "Oh, this is a safe food, not a binge food." "It's been a long time since I ate this. It's not a problem for me anymore." "I really didn't have enough for breakfast, I need to eat this now."

You can guess what happens next. That extra food turns into a trigger for another losing battle with food. Making up convenient lies to cover up true motives or justify actions is called "rationalizing." A closely related word, "rational" means having reason and sound judgment. These words, with the same root and origin could not be further apart in meaning- or further apart in their effect on my abstinence and recovery.

The truth is that rationalizing about food is NOT RATIONAL. In fact, it's a form of insanity that leads to an unmanageable life and keeps me in the clutches of a fatal disease. What is the alternative to rationalizing? *The truth*. Only by acknowledging the truth – that I am a compulsive overeater, that I am powerless over food, that I have a fatal disease – can I accept and use the tools and steps that help me make rational decisions. ~Anonymous (reprinted from the Milwaukee Intergroup Cocoon March April 2010)

Readings to help work or meet on Step 6:

Lifeline Sampler: “The Criminal and the Princess” p 140-141; “Past Perfect” p75-76.

For Today: pp 50, 224, 290,308.

Voices of Recovery: 15, 59, 153, 164, 216, 217, 263, 282, 304.

Seeking the Spiritual Path: “Guideposts to God’s Will” p50-51; “The OA Door” p62-63; “Justifiable Anger” p 72-73; “Formula Folly” p102.

Abstinence: “Recovery Roster” p 102-103.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA: pp 53-58.

Alcoholics Anonymous: p76 “We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.”

God doing for me...

So last month I was involved in a celebration in another state, that brought together people from many walks of life, from all over the country. I was worried because I would only know 2 people there. I was worried, because before program, it was situations like this that would have seen me in the food to avoid conversation with strangers. But I shared this at a meeting before I left town. Wonderfully, I was able to enjoy the celebration and befriended many of the guests. We chatted and played games as if we’d known each other forever. Only in OA have I had this experience before. During the course of the weekend I did get to an OA meeting, had some phone and email contact with OA friends, did some reading and prayer and exercise, and stuck to my food plan despite travel. I also was blessed with a peek into what life was like before program when one of the guests complained to me that she didn’t know anyone at her table at dinner and everyone else at least knew one person. I answered that there were two men at our table who both knew none of the rest of us and that it was the intention of the guest of honor that we all get to know each other and not just sit with our cronies. I feel so blessed that I could learn from others, be abstinent in the face of challenges and live life on life’s terms. So blessed. ~Anonymous

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