

The REACH OUT

Overeaters Anonymous, San Diego County Intergroup, Inc.

July 2009 - Issue 7

STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

A recovering compulsive overeater is like a turtle on a fence post; you know it had help. The principle behind Step Seven is Humility. Alone I can no more rid myself of my character defects than a turtle can climb a fence post, but God can and does do for me what I cannot do for myself. AA's *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* states, "The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear – primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded. Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration. Therefore, no peace was to be had unless we could find a means of reducing these demands."

True humility brings with it acceptance. Self-centered fear is neutralized in my life by realizing who my Higher Power is and how He works in my life. If I fail to get something I demand, God did not want me to have it. If I lose something I already possessed, it must be for the best or I would not have lost it. If I insist on having things my way, there is a lack of humility. It is arrogance deluding me into thinking I know better than God Himself. I can look back at countless times where I thank God I did not get what I wanted. I find peace when I remind myself God has the big picture. He is the source of our highest good and He is working behind the scenes. I can throw my child-like tantrum, but in the final analysis the will of God is always something better than I could have imagined for myself. The sooner I can muster the necessary willingness and humility to allow the will of God to come about in whatever way divine wisdom considers best, rather than in any particular way I may have outlined for myself, the sooner I find serenity.

I can say I believe God can remove my shortcomings but it is when I act on that belief and put down my fork, choose to forgive, don't send that e-mail to "set the record straight," etc., that I am exhibiting trust. It is when you act on Faith that you actually have it. The Big Book states, "When we became *compulsive overeaters*, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?"

Most of us share the same Alma Mater; we graduated from the School of Hard Knocks. In fact, from time to time I even go back and take a class or two, but with the principle of humility as my guide I need not be shocked, deflated, or discouraged when I do. Step Seven offers hope of a better way – an alternative to hitting a humiliating bottom with every single defect as I did with my compulsive eating. AA's *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* states, "We saw we needn't always be bludgeoned and beaten into humility. It could come quite as much from our voluntarily reaching for it as it could from unremitting suffering. A

great turning point in our lives came when we sought for humility as something we really wanted, rather than as something we must have."

God answers the prayers of the heart, not of the lips. If you "turn it over" but do not "let go," you end up upside down. Step Seven says we "asked." It does not say we begged or pleaded. I believe it is God's good pleasure to remove our shortcomings. God does not need me to grovel. He simply wants me to cooperate sincerely. God can change me if it is what I truly want. When I take one step towards God, He takes two towards me. There were hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of times that I would beg and plead for God to stop me as I sped towards the supermarket or the all-you-can-eat buffet planning a binge. My prayers were empty. They were merely lip service. During those times I did not reach out and make an OA call nor go to a meeting, because deep down I wanted to eat. It is truly easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting. As Ghandi said, "We must become the change we want to see."

Humility also deals with character building. I cannot live a spiritual life doing unspiritual things. For many years I heard the phrase "Do the next right thing." Problem is, I can rationalize and delude myself into thinking some of the most insane things are the next right thing. I remember a time when I heard on the radio that it takes 21 days to develop a habit. So, I figured I could go ahead and overeat but as long as I stop before the end of 21 days it would not become a habit. Yeah, right! In short order I was completely out of control. I ended up gaining over 100 pounds. When you dance with a gorilla, it is the gorilla that decides when to stop. By the grace of God, after a few years I found my way back into recovery. Now I believe there is a better standard – "Do the next character-building thing."

Humbly asking God to remove my shortcomings has transformed my life from suicidal depression to seeing my life-long dreams and aspirations coming true. My existence was tortured by: denial, ego, cowardice, self-deception, shame, guilt, self-seeking, apathy, pride, arrogance, self-indulgence, resistance, irresponsibility, indifference, perfectionism, procrastination, impatience, selfishness, self-centeredness, and isolation. Today, for the most part, my life is characterized by: acceptance, open-mindedness, serenity, trust, self-awareness, surrender, freedom, responsibility, determination, tolerance, vigilance, efficiency, consistency, wisdom, inspiration, enlightenment, fellowship, gratitude, and charity. Words cannot adequately express all that God has done for me. I know for a fact I am not God's gift to OA. OA is God's gift to me. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

~ Michael

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Tel: 619-521-2538 ▶ Fax: 619-521-2548 ▶ Website: www.oasandiego.org ▶ E-mail: oasd@sbcglobal.net

SPONSORS
NEW SECTION . . .

**Are you an available sponsor?
If so, an OA member may need your support. Email your phone number to dtyler126@yahoo.com to be posted in this space in the next issue.**

HOTLINE

Ann Marie S.	619-428-5231
Dave B.	619-224-4500
<i>(East Coast calls welcome)</i>	<i>cell: 619-787-2937</i>
Don B.	619-420-0357
Christine (anorexic)	619-992-5344
Flor (Spanish speaking)	760-931-9802
Gillian	619-563-5167
Jill	619-459-1018
Jo	562-948-5040
Lisa (anorexic)	775-790-2206
Linda J.	619-415-3510
Liz	858-336-7214
Mary Jane	858-616-6472
Shannon (bulimic)	860-604-3122
Thomas F.	619-280-1956
Wilma	760-966-1812

SPEAKERS

Alice C.	858-292-7643
Barbara R.	619-448-3472
Barbara S.	858-458-9415
Bill C.	858-458-9415
Carolee	619-589-1842
Dave B.	619-224-4500
	<i>cell 619-787-2937</i>
Don B.	619-420-0357
Garry	619-582-0469
Jill	619-459-1018
Joe C.	858-571-5300
Pam T.	619-207-1856
Phyllis S.	858-569-1616
Samantha	858-565-1974
Steve P.	760-231-1492
Thomas F.	619-280-1956
Tracy	760-489-6601
Virgil	619-749-9810

It is important that you are available and willing to return calls promptly.

To have your name added to (or removed from) a list above call Donna T. 858-673-5587

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR . . .

Happy July, Everyone.

I thought I would share one of my writing assignments this month.

*"When I open my mind to input from others, insights emerge.
I need to hear the messages others are trying to give."*

Through listening to others, I hear my story. I find others who share in my struggles even though our stories are our own, we still can bond. Also when listening to others, it tells my mind to shut up so it can hear the message. It keeps my focus outward instead of inward. I have to quiet the storm from within to be able to hear the input from others. The input can be something very subtle but be very important and if I am not quiet within, I cannot hear what I need to hear. Input can be very dramatic and grand and kind of hits me up side the head like a 2x4 and that is okay as well because maybe I need that 2x4 to smack me before I truly hear what I need to. Granted the input may not be what I want, but it is what I need.

The second part that is just as important as getting the input is digesting the input and taking the appropriate action that is needed. Nine times out of ten, the action that is needed is to change me, to clean up my side of the street, to admit my faults, to be willing to make my amends and to learn. In doing this, I grow. It also allows me to give back to others as well. It gives me the ability to share, to experience and provide input for others.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Tracy

TRUSTED SERVANTS

Chair	Tracy	760-489-6601
Vice Chair	Rex	619-302-3003
Secretary (acting)	Heather	858-386-9448
Treasurer	Dave B.	619-224-4500
Internal Information (acting)	David H.	858-382-0014
Literature (acting)	Mary	619-922-2468
Professional Outreach	Gina	619-758-1531
Public Information	Vacant	
Reach Out Editor	Donna T.	858-673-5587
	<i>Submit articles to dtyler126@yahoo.com and put Reach Out in the subject line</i>	
Recorder	Vacant	
Region 2 Coordinator	Ginger G.	619-425-3000
Retreat Liaison	Iola	619-370-4594
WSO Coordinator (acting)	Ken	619-212-5292
Young People's Coordinator	Vacant	
12th Step Within Committee (acting)	Donna W.	619-549-0548

RAISE YOUR HANDS

We have something wonderful in the gift of sponsorship. It's not only free; we grow to be happy, joyous and free! I believe I have to give it away to keep it, and sponsorship is one of the ways I can give back. To me sponsorship is a daily exercise in honesty, a root of our program. We sponsor for ourselves, not others, because we work the Steps again with our sponsees and we usually say what we need to hear ourselves. My sponsees help me more than they will ever know, and I am very grateful.

Sponsoring is a great tool for encouraging others to give service. If you want to get something, sponsor a new-

comer. Our founder tells us that if we have one day of abstinence, we should tell another how we got that day. At a WSBC workshop, I heard it said that you become a sponsor when the first person asks you to sponsor him or her because then you have shown someone else recovery. I've been told that your sponsees will fix your problems for you. You work so hard on theirs that suddenly yours are gone.

So next time sponsors are asked to identify themselves in meetings, raise your hand because "hand-in-hand— together we can."

J.G.

(Reprinted from *Lifeline*, June 2006)

TRADITION SEVEN

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

"Seven follows five and six. If OA is to fulfill our primary purpose and remain free of outside influences, we must stay free of the need for outside contributions. OA must be fully self supporting." All service bodies, from your small home group to the WSO Board of Trustees and all the international groups, need funds to keep the doors open and to carry the message. It is the responsibility of the membership to see that the we are kept fiscally sound. We should never become de-

pendent on "outside" funds because that could produce "outside" influence. We are not a charitable organization soliciting funds from the general public. We are not investors in anything other than carrying the message. We do have lots of expenses and they are covered by the 7th tradition collections, and sometimes even that has to be increased. However, we do not accrue large amounts of money in our treasury. There should be a prudent reserve to meet short term expenses. This starts in our small home groups who send funds to their intergroup, region and then World Service. It is vital to support each echelon. Our organization is growing and funds are desperately needed both

here and abroad. It is expensive to carry the message. There is an additional aspect to this tradition. It follows that not only we do function on our own donations, but also on our own service. It takes people and time to do our service work. No one is paid, at least not in funds, but in recovery. Everything we do to carry the message is a deposit in your own personal recovery account. In the OA 12&12, there are many questions each group should bring to the floor to check our involvement in this aspect of the Program. I could talk for hours about doing service and its rewards. Financial good health is part of my responsibility to my group.

~Phyllis

Tomorrow is too late. Live today!

My grandparents bought a mobile home on a lake 200 miles from their home so that they could spend summers there when my grandfather retired. They loved it there and planned and planned to live out their dream there. My grandfather reached retirement age, but each year he decided to work just one more year to earn a little higher pension when they had "enough" to live on. They never spent a summer at the lake, because he developed an aggressive form of Cancer and died before they ever realized their dream.

My minister called and asked if we could get together for lunch some years ago, a very rare invitation, and I told her I was too busy at work, but I would call her when work slowed down, which it never happened in 20 years, because I was a workaholic. She had been given a notice by her doctor that she had six months to live, and she was getting with her friends one by one to say goodbye in private, not wanting to make her illness public. She died before we had that lunch.

Some things are difficult to say on the phone. I wonder how many times I made frivolous excuses to avoid meeting with someone when they really needed a friend or how many people I have made feel unloved and unvalued by my excuses. I will never know. How many wonderful experiences have I excused from my life I will never know.

I am the Queen of Excuses with social anxiety always ready to pounce on any invitation. I gave up being a workaholic three years ago, taking a lesson from my grandfather I retired at age 58. I turned a new leaf this month and gave up excuses as one of my other character defects. I've traded my bad hair days for living. There is usually no better time to accept an invitation than right now. Each day I live is my gift, not God's obligation.

~Diana

Announcements

MEETING UPDATES

NEW LOCATION:

Tuesday, Vista, 7:30 pm, meeting has moved to Buena Vista Knolls Senior Living, 2041 West Vista Way, Vista

NEW MEETINGS:

Saturday, OASIS, 1 pm, Young People
Wednesday, OASIS, 5:45 pm, Young People

CLOSED:

Wednesday, Hillcrest, 4 pm
Thursday, City Heights, 6:45 pm
Friday, OASIS, Midnight

NEEDS SUPPORT:

Tuesday, Serenity Shop, Noon (didn't close)

NEED CONTACT PERSON:

Tuesday, OASIS, 6 pm, Step Study

NEWCOMER MEETINGS:

First Sunday of every month, OASIS, 6:30 pm, focus on Anorexia/Bulimia
Monday, OASIS, 6:30 pm
Saturday, OASIS, 8 am
Saturday, Encinitas, 8:30 am (need sponsors)

Seventh Step Prayer

My Creator,

I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding.

JULY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Intergroup Meeting: July 1, 7 pm, OASIS

12th Step Within Meeting: July 4, 10:15 am, OASIS

Marathon Meetings: July 4, OASIS, between regular scheduled meetings (call or see schedule posted at the OASIS for times)

Upcoming Retreats/Conferences/
Conventions/Workshops

155th Serenity Retreat: October 9-11, Pathfinder Ranch, Idyllwild

Mailing Party

The fun begins at 10:15 am
Even 15 minutes will help

Next Party
July 25th

Call David H., 858-382-0014, if questions

LITERATURE TEAM

The following members can arrange to sell you OA literature at the OASIS.

Mary 619-922-2468

Literature Chair

Dave H. 858-382-0014

Rex 619-302-3003

Dave B. 619-787-2937

Saturday: 9 am—1 pm

Gina S. 619-758-1531

Tuesday: 11:30 am—1:30 pm

Wednesday: 11:30 am—1:30 pm

Saturday: 8:30 am—Noon

There may also be a literature person at your meeting, or you can order online at http://www.oa.org/literature_catalog.htm, or stop by the Serenity Shop.

CAREFRONTATION CORNER

The 155th Serenity Retreat is officially scheduled at Pathfinder Ranch, Mountain Center near Idyllwild. The dates are October 9-11 from 5 pm Friday until 11 am Sunday. Pre-register at \$136 or after September 28 at \$155. The Retreat theme is Co-ed Sweet Surrender. We already have more than ten registered and the numbers and the enthusiasm is growing. What better way is there to spend an entire weekend than with friends and fellowship. Having fun, improving our abstinence and, most of all, working Program and improving our Spirituality. Sounds like another miracle in the making to me.

Iola, Retreat Liaison