

The REACH OUT

Overeaters Anonymous, San Diego County Intergroup, Inc.

June 2009 - Issue 6

STEP SIX

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

Ever notice how everyone wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die? I may talk about wanting the promises of the program – to be happy, joyous, and free but am I really willing to let the old me die? Am I willing to truly let go and allow God to do whatever it takes to make me the person He wants me to be? Am I finally willing to be free of anger? Free of fear? Free of selfishness? Do I even believe it is possible? If so, what would my life be like? The principle of Step Six is *Willingness*. It states, “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Step Six is not conditional. It does not leave any wiggle room. I must be willing to change one thing... everything!

If a shortcoming is like a flat tire, a character defect is like driving on it. You may have heard there are no “musts” in the program.

I can't begin to explain the lengths I have gone to just to justify my right to be angry. Feeling angry is different than being angry. The difference is more than semantics. I can feel my feelings without becoming those feelings. I can acknowledge the anger, fear, selfishness, etc., without feeding it. Its source is a defect within me but I want to blame something outside myself. When I begin justifying, I must discard my “rights” and ask myself a few key questions, “How important is it really? How important is it compared to my serenity, my emotional sobriety? Would I rather be right or would I rather be happy?”

The first five steps have all been building up to this point. If a sufficient amount of Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, and Integrity have been practiced in their application we have certainly gotten the ball rolling and it has picked up momentum. When we put the right amount of willingness into the mix, God can change us in an instant. In my experience, when the shift occurs, everything changes from one moment to the next. One minute I was hopeless and desperate and the next I

felt a surge of God's presence and all was well. It may have taken well over a year for my body to catch up with the change in my consciousness but the change took place in an instant.

On pages 54 and 55 of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, it states, “Say what we will about being ‘completely ready’ in a general way to have God remove our shortcomings, when it came to specifics, we'd rather hang on to a few choice ones. For these reasons we're tempted to rationalize the sixth step itself. ‘After all, nobody expects us to be perfect,’ we say, ‘We strive for progress, not perfection.’ *Such reasoning only delays our recovery.* The sixth step calls for us to be *entirely* ready to have God remove *all* our defects of character. Those of us who take this step with the total commitment required to make it work do indeed strive for the ultimate refinement of our character.” Step Six is not a one-time thing – it is a lifetime thing!

When you touch a hot stove, you rarely ever touch another hot stove again. It is not an intellectual process but rather on a gut level you know to never do that again. The fearless and thorough moral inventory I took in Step Four and admitting the exact nature of my wrongs in Step Five act as that hot stove. When I truly internalize what I have done, feel the pain I have caused myself, as well as those around me, at that moment I am entirely ready. In that instant I *want* to change. On page 56 it goes on to say, “Being ‘entirely ready’ means that we firmly turn our backs on the old self-destructive behaviors and make every effort to act and live by the principles embodied in the twelve steps.” By turning off the automatic pilot, I can surrender old survival skills that no longer serve me.

To me, the sixth step is far more than any assignment. It is a series of moments where the desire to change is real and great. For example, when answering the question, “How

do you react when people disagree with you?” in Step Four of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* I was painfully confronted with my defect of Pride. I realized how I had demeaned my Father. He was my best friend, my first teacher – a truly great man who had always been there for me. I would roll my eyes and treat him like an idiot. I thought I was so smart and better educated. Pride had blinded me into playing God. I was dismissive and disapproving. The pain and shame this realization caused me was exactly like placing my hand on a hot stove. In the deepest core of my being I was not only sorry but was entirely ready to change. I could not even stand the idea of continuing to be that person for another minute. I humbly asked God to change me and immediately proceeded to make amends. The steps have a synergistic power for change. God indeed does do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

I am powerless over each of my defects of character, just as I am powerless over food. For far too many years in my active compulsive overeating I was really asking God to remove my fat while allowing me to go on eating whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. In the same way, I cannot afford to ask God to remove the consequences of my character defects while allowing me to go on acting out on them however I want, whenever I want. As I had to hit bottom with my eating behavior, I had to hit bottom with each of these traits. When I am ready, God has the power to change me. In Step Six, *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* offers a wonderful promise, “We will become wiser, saner, more effective people as we recover from the disease of compulsive eating. We'll find we can cope with both good times – and bad, learning and growing spiritually from each experience, as our Higher Power intended us to do all along.”

~ Michael

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SPONSORS

NEW . . .

**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 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
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Mary Jane	858-616-6472
Shannon (bulimic)	860-604-3122
Thomas F.	619-280-1956
Wilma	760-966-1812

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Barbara R.	619-448-3472
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Phyllis S.	858-569-1616
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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 June Everyone! Wow, the year is just flying by.

As I was gathering my thoughts on what to share, what came to me was the thought of how many times the committee within my head meets. My head is not a safe neighborhood and the committee that lives in that neighborhood is also not safe either. How often have I been "tricked" by this committee and their propaganda of false hopes, false love, and false sense of security? The answer is more than I would like to admit. The committee in my head feeds off many things. I also find that this committee has a "trickle down" effect that starts impacting more than my thoughts. There is a direct connection to "listening" to the committee and my sense of serenity. There is a direct connection to "how" I interact with others. There is a direct connection to my "perception" of any person place or thing and let me tell you, this direct connection is not a positive one.

As I start my seventh year of recovery and abstinence this month, the committee in my head still tries hard to get me to buy into their lies, deceit and trickery. The good news is, however, that I have learned and am continuing to learn how not to give the committee power. I have learned and continue to learn that I have the ability and right to tell this committee to sit down and shut up. How I continue to learn to do this is simply by working my program, by using the tools that are available, by being honest with myself and by working the steps. The best part is that as I grow in recovery the stronger my ability becomes to tell the committee that their services are no longer needed.

~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
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Young People's Coordinator	Vacant	
12th Step Within Committee (acting)	Donna W.	619-549-0548

I don't even want to imagine not having the gift of OA meetings and the strong, dedicated people that help to make them happen here in San Diego. I say gift because all I have to do is travel or talk to out of town members to realize how fortunate I am here in San Diego. To me, this reading is a call to service. If I draw upon a common expression, I say that I find it very comfortable to let others sow while I reap the benefits. Often times I don't even consider or appreciate the dedication, willingness and commitment that it takes to do service, no matter what the position is. I've heard it said and come to understand that just showing up at meetings is doing service. How easy is it to not even consider the fact that so many other members are giving of their time and effort to attend a meeting and share their experience as only a fellow OA can. The flipside to this is that when I go to meetings, I too am doing service. I shouldn't un-

derestimate the importance of going to meetings. It not only benefits me, but it benefits my fellow members as well. Doing service is one of the tools of the program. The twelfth step talks about the need to carry the message and demonstrates the vital role that doing serve plays in maintaining recovery. I have found that perfection and performance are not always standards with which I should measure my program. I have heard, and come to believe that one of the best standards and cornerstones to recovery is willingness. I am now willing to try and give back to the program some of the wonderful blessings that I have enjoyed as a benefit of working it. I am willing to do service, even if it is by doing something simple and not often recognized as service. Today I will go to a meeting. I may even share. I will try not take for granted the act of doing service for the benefit of my program and the program of my OA friends. ~Liz

**JUNE IS
ELECTION
MONTH
A GOOD
TIME TO
GIVE BACK
BY DOING
SERVICE**

Eat, Drink, and be Merry

Someone mentioned this phrase at the meeting this morning, and it drew many interesting comments. I could tell that I am in a good place, because of where it took my thinking.

With my food plan, I can eat whatever I want. That is a fact. And the wonderful part is that I truly WANT to eat beautiful, healthy food choices. That is a gift that is given to me each day by my Higher Power, because I sure couldn't do it on my own. That I proved many times.

There was a time when "eating what I want" meant something entirely different. It meant eating some healthy foods, but mostly it meant eating junk, desserts, and snacks, in fact, anything that I could put into my mouth. Today, there are things I chose not to eat because they are not good for my body, my mind, and/or my spirit.

The same holds true with what I drink. I can drink anything I want. And with God

directing my thinking and my actions, I am able to select sane, healthy things to drink. (OK... I do drink diet Sprite, and I know it's not healthy.) I drink a lot of water, and have grown to love it. It is good for me in so many ways.

Now, to the "being merry" part. THAT, my friends, is easy. I so love the people in this program, at least the ones I have met so far in my 20 years in OA. Let's put it this way, I haven't met any I didn't like. And it is so easy to laugh and be merry with them, knowing they understand me and accept me as I am.

Staying merry is not always possible, thank goodness. I think it would be boring to be that way ALL the time. But I am, much of the time.

Today I had the chance to choose between being merry and not being merry. We went to the store. Our car blew a seal and all our oil leaked out. We made it to a garage where the car is now. We had to take a cab home, which was quite expensive. It meant

eating lunch about 1 1/2 hours late. That was definitely a place to be UNmerry if ever there was one.

There is so much to be grateful for about that situation, however, that I am merry. The thing that broke is under warranty. We met some wonderful folks at the garage; even a cab driver who carried the groceries for us. We got home safely and the car is fixable. We have another car to use until this one is repaired. We were able to pay for the cab.

I guess this abstinence thing isn't too bad after all. I get the chance to "eat, drink, and be merry" every day of my life. My world is filled with kind, caring people because of this program. And for these I am grateful.

~Janet C.

(Abstinent since February 1989 and maintaining a weight loss of approximately 250 pounds by the grace of God and the OA fellowship.)

TRADITION SIX

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.

As stated in Tradition 5, we must adhere to our primary purpose. We cannot endorse flyers, programs, meetings, books, or any other enterprise, such as treatment centers, vitamin plans/meds/surgery, etc. Nothing, nothing except the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. When Dear Abby recommends OA, we are grateful. We do recommend people read her column. We are not even affiliated with other 12 Step Programs, although many of us are members there as well. It is important not to stress our membership in "those" programs, because we are here to work just this Program. ~Phyllis

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)

Sixth Step Prayer

Dear God,

I am ready for Your help in removing from me the defects of character which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery.

Help me to continue being honest with myself and guide me toward spiritual and mental health.

JUNE EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Intergroup Meeting: June 3, 7 pm, OASIS
12th Step Within Meeting: June 6, 10:15 am, OASIS
154th Serenity Retreat—12th Step Within: June 12-14, Camp Cedar Glen, Julian
Region 2 Convention: June 26-28, Doubletree Hotel, Ontario CA

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
June 27th*

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



PARTICIPATE IN THE SILENT AUCTION

R2 2009 Convention

June 26-28, 2009

Doubletree Hotel—Ontario, CA

Help carry the message by donating:

Artwork, handcrafts, gift cards, program tapes, AA/OA conference approved literature and stuffed animals

Contact: Gretchen, Fundraising Committee at (562) 706-5176 or gmk5898@yahoo.com

CAREFRONTATION CORNER

Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail

Since early 2008 our 12th Step Within committee has been actively planning, developing and producing the program for the June 2009 retreat. Using the ideas of Recovery from Relapse and Relapse Prevention we have planned an awesome program for the upcoming retreat. I urge every one of you to plan to attend this retreat. Plan to enjoy a weekend of abstinent meals, great speakers, inspiring meetings and workshops, and fun times with fellow members of OA. I look forward to seeing you June 12-14 at Camp Cedar Glen in Julian.

One of the tools of recovery is Abstinence - a plan of eating, a plan for "sober living." I plan to pick up the tools of recovery each day so that at the end of the day I can honestly say I did my part in taking right action for my recovery. I am always blessed because I did plan. Think, Pray, Act.

"How do we get through these times without overeating? We don't panic. Instead we quietly reaffirm our personal guidelines and ask our Higher Power to help us continue living within them. Then we turn away from the food and eating to focus our attention on our OA Fellowship and the Twelve Steps." (OA 12&12 pg 23-24)

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Donna Walls ♥ 12th Step Within Committee Chairman
(619) 549-0548 or hopefuldkw@yahoo.com