

NOVATIONS

AUGUST, 2006



This month's edition of Novation is sponsored by the FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY GROUP. Meeting at 7p on Monday evenings at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manassas, this is an OA/HOW open Step/Tradition study group. Each month they read and discuss a Step and Tradition from OA's 12 & 12. Started in December 1976 as an OA discussion group, the meeting changed in 1994 to a simplified HOW format. The meeting is a mix of newcomers, seasoned long-timers and

STEP 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

TRADITION 8

Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

FRUIT OF STEP 8

Brotherly Love.

PROMISE OF STEP 8

Our whole outlook upon life will change.

CONCEPT 8

The Board of Trustees has delegated to its Executive Committee the responsibility to administer the OA World Service Office.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH STEP 8

In the course of my days in recovery, I've had the opportunity to do a number of 8th Steps. I was advised by a sponsor early on to list every name mentioned in my 4th Step inventory. That was easy. God was always at the top of the list and in time I saw that I belonged on the list too. That left the rest of the people named in my 4th Step...some of whom would receive the benefit of my 9th Step efforts when Hell froze over. I needed to be reminded that what was required here was a list only— I was not being sent off to make amends yet.

So I made the list. Then I needed the willingness to make amends to them all. It didn't take a rocket scientist to discover that willingness to make amends to some of these people was going to require divine assistance. This recovering compulsive overeater felt that the harm they did to me was great and my part was small. I was living with hatred and the desire to bump off a few people. It took time to realize the significance of my attitude and how that continued to harm me long after the incidents written about in my 4th Step. Maybe I'd be willing if they apologized first and set out a plan to fix what they did to me. Here again the God of my understanding and the program came to the rescue. It didn't matter what they did to me. What mattered was my own wreckage that needed to be repaired if I were to have any chance of happiness and peace in my life.

So I started to pray for a loving and forgiving spirit toward these people and my HP answered. After that, it was easy to ask for forgiveness. It was received and there were no apologies coming back. But that didn't matter because I didn't expect any. It did not make any difference to my peace of mind or well being. I simply did my part with the help of God and my sponsor and that was that. To live peacefully in the world free of guilt from my past is a gift only my Higher Power could have given. It's a blessing to know my God is that powerful! Anon.

TRADITION 8

“Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.” That’s a mouthful! I think it’s interesting to note that 3 of our 12 Traditions are about money. On the surface, this tradition looks like it doesn’t apply to us as individual members. However, since we are encouraged to practice our spiritual principles in all of our affairs, Tradition 8 deserves our attention. So what has it taught me and what are some of the principles I see in Tradition Eight?

“should” - a word that comes up a lot. It’s an ideal. We reach for it. It works better when we pay attention to what the program teaches us. The alternative never brings happy results. Being autonomous we are free to do it our way, but unless we are following the spirit of the Traditions, the results are usually not good.

“forever” - that means always, no exceptions. We want to remain as a fellowship. We do this by paying attention to the Traditions and following them. The alternative is our death and that means the death of OA too.

“nonprofessional” — most of us are amateurs. We don’t get paid for our 12th Step work. Where volunteers are not available, we hire paid workers. Our paid workers are not paid to do 12th Step work. They are paid to make 12th Step work possible for the rest of us so that we may serve all the still suffering compulsive overeaters who need us. Our paid workers answer the phones. They set up internet information and publish printed information so people can find us. They guide people to our meetings and they help loners find someone to talk to. Some of these workers are also members of our fellowship and they are paid for the WORK they do, but not 12th Step work. 12th Step work is done one-on-one and in meetings and in various service functions at the group, intergroup, regional and world service levels. The paid work is their “job” separate from 12th Step work.

To continue to function as a spiritual program on all levels, this Tradition is a reminder of the importance of our fellowship paying a just wage to its employees. Built into this principle is the need to be aware that the cost of living continues to go up and in order for OA to pay its workers our members need to contribute what we can, according to our 7th (self-supporting) Tradition. Anon.

AT SOME OF THESE WE BALKED

I went to a meeting and there was this young lady who was searching for answers. As the meeting progressed through the HOW implementation of the usage of the tools, she became more and more restless until she left the meeting. I always wondered why she took the trouble to drive all the way to the meeting searching for answers but rejected the answers she found.

But then again, when I attended my first HOW meeting, I was desperate and without hope, willing to do anything to lose weight. Here were two requirements that intrigued me. “Only eating products with sugar listed as the fifth ingredient or beyond” really made sense because sugar is addictive. After going 2 1/2 months without sugar, I sampled a spoonful of my wife’s “frozen binge food”. It took a nanosecond for the drug-like affect of the sugar to reach my brain and I was back in the food. I was just 8 pounds away from making a weight limit for a strenuous activity. Two months later I was so far in the food I was without hope.

The second intriguing requirement was the “the food plan come from a nutritionist, dietician, or doctor and that all food for the day be committed to a sponsor daily.” One sponsor referred to this as working an honest program, another referred to it as working an accurate program. I refer to it as losing control and becoming powerless over food.

There are so many people who are interested in achieving the results that HOW produces but are unwilling to relinquish their control over their food or the implementation of the program. Having said that, I was in relapse for that very reason and the only difference between me and the young lady was that she at least attended a partial meeting while I stayed home being miserable and in despair. Wally F.

STEP 8

Well, I can make a list of person I've harmed. I'm good at that...nice and neat, tidy ...I'll make a list and I'll even file it nicely. That's half done — you see it's that efficiency mentality. The second half of this step — become willing to make amends and the dreaded word: ALL— was not quite so easy. A wise sponsor suggested that I divide my list into categories: those I could do, those I'd think about doing and those to whom I would never, absolutely never make amends. I did that too. Somewhere around this time it also became clear to me through prayer and meditation that I did not owe amends to someone I simply did not like. I further prayed and wrote about whether or not my behavior toward that person reflected my poor thoughts. This continues today.

There was no easy definitive answer I felt to the question "To whom do I owe amends?" HP did allow me to see some glaring issues. One is my brother. Originally he was on my never, never list. Well, I'm now talking with him and we hope to meet this summer. I can see my own faults, my shortcomings in that relationship and I seek to repair damage done. How it goes is in my HP's hands. I know I can't control the outcome of this or any other thing for my life is in HP's most capable hands.

The key here is my own attitude as this process unfolds. HP has made me be a kinder person toward myself and others. Each of the 12 Steps has changed my life dramatically. When I think that I walked into the OA rooms a morbidly obese, depressed soul who wanted only to lose

TOOL OF THE MONTH: MEETINGS

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience, and the strength and hope OA has given them. Though there are many types of meetings, fellowship with other compulsive overeaters is the basis of them all. Meetings give us an opportunity to identify and confirm our common problem and to share the gifts we receive through this program

The veterinarian who treats my cat frowned with disgust during a pet exam several years ago. My cat was growing fatter with each visit and the doctor held me responsible. What had I been giving Kitty to eat? And how much? How unfair it seemed to me that the vet was holding me responsible for the cat's weight problem!! In that moment I realized that I was harming my pet with excessive "love" — giving little crumbs of desserts and fatty meat scraps. I was doing the same careless and over indulgent behaviors with Kitty that I had done to myself before I found OA.

How self-centered I'd been to think that OA principles only applied to me! The emotional principles of our program can be applied to interactions with all our relations. My willfulness — that desire to find love in food — was detrimental, not just to myself, but to innocent creatures around me. Too much food is fatal! That August, I applied the eighth step to my pet care. I evaluated my interactions: I had been too lazy to train Kitty to respect my food. He wanted tidbits off my dinner plate and I needed to control my urge to toss them to him. I learned to clean up scrapes I dropped and not use Kitty as a vacuum cleaner. I stopped setting out unlimited bowls of kibble. I measured meals that were appropriate for his age and size. True to the OA program Kitty began to slim down and to behave better. He stopped snatching a human food and started resting quietly during our meal times. In all, I am a more responsible pet owner, Kitty is a healthier cat and "Dr Smith" is a more satisfied veterinarian. Sally G.

RESULTS OF FAITH IN A HIGHER POWER....

I have seen so many results from faith in God. I know that He is always there for me even if I choose not to seek Him. With Faith, I know that there is always HOPE no matter what the circumstance.

Hope reminds me that no matter what, there is stability and I am not driven by winds of a whim. I have faith today that I can be abstinent because I sought God this morning and prayed for abstinence. Having said that, I have to do my part by following the Steps.

With faith in God comes the fruits of the Spirit...love, peace, joy, patience, long-suffering and self-control. God has given to me each one of these but I need to be willing and ready to accept them. I have to be in God's will by worshipping Him and engaging in fellowship with Him daily. Truly my Faith is rooted in God...always there is Hope...never give up. What a blessing! I keep the focus on God, not on myself. Mary



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*The 2006 Fall
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INTERGROUP CORNER: RECOVERY IN ACTION

Welcome to the Intergroup Corner of *Novations*. We're here to tell you just some of the exciting Recovery-Promoting activities going on in Intergroup each month. Are you ready?

*****Intergroup is coming to YOUR meeting!**
We're coming to visit you, *Novations* in hand.
Get your red carpets ready! (Just kidding!)

The Nominating Committee is meeting for October elections. The positions are: Chair, First and Second Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. We're considering having a Speaker's Meeting before each IG sessions. Watcha think? Come share your recovery with us!

And lastly, if your group isn't getting *Novations* please contact Maria @ loveylady@yahoo.com or call her @ 571.332.8458 (your Humble Comm Within Chairperson) and we'll arrange a pick up.

Let's stay abstinent together!

Editorial Policy:
The opinions expressed in *Novations* reflect those of the writers and not Northern Virginia Intergroup nor OA as a whole, or the Editor of *Novations*; nor does the publication of any article imply endorsement. The editor welcomes any and all contributions, and reserves the right to edit all articles.