



FREEDON INTERGROUP'S ROAD TO RECOVERY APRIL 2009

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

FIRST "RECOVERY" STEP

I recently heard a speaker discuss the Fourth Step, which explained some things for me about the OA program. This speaker said that Step Four is the first "recovery" step. Somehow, I had grasped concepts of abstinence and using the tools, but not that the goal of the program is recovery for our poor, sick minds.

During my time in OA I have noticed that many people lose a great deal of weight, but that some stay and some leave. I became aware that the Fourth Step was involved here; most of those who left had not completed a Fourth Step. I've since nicknamed Step Four "The Lump."

I realized after hearing this speaker that I have classified myself in the "fat serenity" category, but now that's okay with me since I am not compulsively overeating. I now know that the aim of the OA program is sanity, and that today I am sane and in recovery. My fears, resentments and anger have abated. Most of the time I act on life rather than react. I suspect I will be a healthy "chart" size when my Higher Power has adjusted my insides to be happy with that size body.

In the meantime I relish my recovery which started with Step Four P.H., Little Rock, Arkansas -LIFELINE April 1995

Much Less to Fear

A fearless moral inventory: Who am I and what kind of person am I? As a child, I was strong, healthy and creative - a leader. I had friends, but was I a friend? Sometimes.

Was I taught friendship? No. Mother was reserved; Dad was often brusque and felt persecuted and alone. I received few compliments or assurances of my worth, so I went it alone; creating my own world. I realize now that my parents fed us too many sweets and always talked about money and their ability to afford something. My dad often vented, criticizing and belittling us. He ruined many days.

Did this have something to do with my use of food as comfort, to shield myself and reward my cravings for love and approval?

Why did I learn to steal things? The first thing I remember stealing was a five-cent chocolate bar. In elementary school, a friend and I stole small items from a dime store. While working in my folks' store I stole a dollar a day. As an adult I stole greeting cards, small continues page 3 column 1)

Tradition Four

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole"

Tradition Four defines our freedom. Our groups are free to find what works best for them. They can make their own mistakes and learn from them

There are only two limits to this freedom: we may not do anything which will injure OA as a whole, and we must remain free from outside influence. Our decisions must be by group conscience. Let us see how this works. Suppose a group decides to have no format, to eliminate the Twelve Steps. Of course it is free to do so, but it is no longer an OA group and should not identify itself as such. It is simply a diet club. If members make a habit of going out after meetings and overeating together, they should not speak of themselves as OA members, lest they harm the reputation of OA as a whole. On the other hand, if a group votes to regulate smoking area or to institute abstinence requirements for officers it is exercising group autonomy.

If a meeting is held in a church or school, it must, of course, conform to rules about smoking, noise, tidiness, etc. But its membership is not to be confined to members of the church or residents of the area. It must be open to all who wish to abstain from compulsive overeating. Nor is its freedom of expression to be limited by non-members.

Group conscience is always our guide. -copied from OA Pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

SIDE DISHES

Mishearings:

"Welcome to the Tuesday noon meeting, of Overeaters Anonymous!" I spoke this on 12/24/91. Some of us heard "get obstinate" when we walked in the doors of OA. Over time, we learned that they were saying "get abstinent."

-C., Durham, NC

The 4th step of OA states "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves". .

When I was asked to write something about my fourth step, it sure was timely for me, as after 17 years in the OA program and under the guidance of my newest Sponsor, for sure I became aware that one never graduates no matter how long one has been in the fellowship. And as I was an oldtimer, and felt that I have done the whole work of the OA program and done my 4th step more than once; she simply told me to use the Work Book and got me started from scratch. I was unhappy about it, but after reading and writing about willingness and honesty I decided to go ahead thinking about the OA slogan that says "to go to any length to get a recovery", I do enjoy my Sponsor's guidance of my own program. I did mention that this write-up was timely because after I completed the Work Book somehow my Sponsor suggested to go back to my 4th step and I discovered, despite that I got my goal weight shedding a 45lb weight loss after only 6 months in the program and maintaining my physical abstinence, I needed to add in my inventory the lack of emotional and spiritual abstinence, which included some of my character defects such as controlling, and misjudging others; these were the stumbling blocks to my total recovery as my illness is of 3 folds, physical, emotional and spiritual; therefore they needed to be addressed working along with the rest of the twelve steps. What a discovery this was; Now that I have added these unchecked character defects into my inventory I discovered that I have not totally turned them over to my Higher Power (God of my understanding). Next time I will write about how I will work these stumbling blocks, but this time I only need to list them in my fearless moral inventory. I am aware that my illness is an incurable one but it can be recovered if I work the program to the best of my ability on a daily basis and as the OA slogan states "IT WORKS IF ONE WORKS IT". - Francisca. Citrus County



A reminder!

**Freedom I/G made the decision.
at the Feb. 14, 2009 meeting,
to no longer print the newsletter for
distribution to our groups, due to the cost of
printing and postage.**

**It was suggested that the groups have one of
their members go to oafreedom.org
to print off copies for their individual group.
It was also suggested that each member could
print off their own and only making copies
to have at meeting for newcomers or members
without a computer.**

**A RECOVERY THOUGHT
FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK**

Monday Wash Day: God help me wash away all my selfishness and vanity, so I may serve you with perfect humility through the week.



Tuesday Ironing Day: Dear God, help me iron out all the wrinkle of prejudice I have collected through the years so that I may see the beauty in others.



Wednesday Mending Day: O God, help me mend my ways so I will not set a bad example for others.



Thursday Cleaning Day: God, help me to dust out all the many faults I have been hiding in the secret corners of my heart.



Friday Shopping Day: O God, give me the grace to shop wisely : I may purchase eternal happiness for myself and all others in need of love.



Saturday Cooking Day: Help me, God, to brew a big kettle of brotherly love and serve it with clean, sweet bread of human kindness.



Sunday Your Day: O God, I have prepared my house for you. Please help me so I may spend the day and the rest of my life in your presence. - Anonymous

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 18, 2009 Mini Summit - Speaker Marathon
Friendship United Methodist Church
Clearwater, FL (contact:Stephanie 727-442-985
[to join carpool contact Barbara Joy 727-937-1964])

May 1-3, 2009 Freedom Intergroup - Acceptance BB Retreat
Franciscan Retreat Center
Tampa, FL (contact:Jeannine 727-849-3048
ja@tampabay.rr.com
Barbara Joy 727-937-1964
jarbyboy1@tampabay.rr.com

FOR FLYERS GO TO oafreedom.org and click on EVENTS

(continued from page 1, column 1)

grocery-store items-petty stuff, but it added up. I hate to think of what the total might be.

Where were my values? When playing bridge, I wanted to so much to win that I was willing to cheat. As a journalist I even borrowed or adapted (stole) the ideas and writings of others for publication. I was fired from a writing job because of plagiarism. It broke my heart. I did have a few outlets after that. Why, when it makes me sad and anxious after cheating or stealing, do I do it? It's a miserable habit.

What caused this bright, talented young woman to be so needy? For my dishonesty, I have paid a price - a sense of guilt, fear of discovery, sadness after the act. I've saved money, but was it worth the damage to my character and self-esteem? I believe others do this too. That doesn't make it right.

What would it take and how would it feel to change? I could look life in the eye and know that I am clean. I would know I had nothing to hide and much less to fear. Through OA, by honest and humble working of the Steps and using the wonderful OA tools, might I realize a new joy, peace of mind and purpose to life? Can I with trust put my character defects in the hands of a loving Higher Power? I'm going to try, I will let go and let God for a change.

After writing the above I read several entries in the *For Today* book. Each addressed what I was struggling with! I feel a new freedom and more self-respect. The last quotes I read were from page 21: "Being entirely honest with oneself is a good exercise" (Sigmund Freud) and "Self-honesty makes me feel good about myself." Thank you Higher Power. May I be worthy of your blessedness!

--Anonymous, Vero Beach, Florida USA --LIFELINE April 2005

Taking the fourth

I would like to send my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to the writer of "A gentle fourth step" (Jan. '92). Almost every line of that article could have been written by me! Only the pounds lost, profession, and length of OA membership are different. The brilliant and sensitive insights the author achieved were a wonderful revelation and great comfort to me.

I'm a relative newcomer to OA yet I've tried for two years to overcome my lack of self-esteem. Reticence and timidity are problems for me. Thanks to the author, I have an idea of how I can reorient my thinking and still follow the twelve steps. What a marvelous perspective the article had!

--E.B., Palo Alto, CA -Lifeline April 1992

(to read the story the above author is talking about turn to page 4)

"Whose job is it anyway?"

Once there was an OA group,
That functioned like a regular troop;
Somebody always opened with the key,
Then everybody prayed for serenity.

Yes, anybody was welcomed there
And nobody was told not to share;
They rotated every service position
And gave generously to the Seventh Tradition.

Nobody thought of shame or glory,
While telling anybody his OA story;
There were always plenty of positive pitches,
And the meeting ran without any glitches.

Anyone willing to go to any length
Could share in everyone's hope and strength;
All working together made this discovery --
The steps were the way to each one's recovery.

Then - somebody forgot the key,
And everybody lost their serenity;
Anybody could have brought it,
but nobody even thought it.

"Whose job is it, anyway?"
"Not mine!" each would say.
A problem, baffling, cunning and powerful,
Everybody left feeling sorrowful.

And that was the end of that group of OA.
Where everybody asked, "Whose job is it, anyway?"
'Cause nobody remembered that service is the key
That opened the door to recovery.

-M.L.F., Florida, USA;reprinted from Southeast
Overeaters Region 8 (SOAR) Newsletter,
September 1994

A gentle fourth step

Grim-faced I stared at the long list of accusing questions and then at my sheet of paper. It remained as blank as my mind.

I couldn't understand why *this* step was so hard; I'd raced through the first three. I'd followed my food plan exactly, was down to goal weight, went to meetings, made phone calls, and gave service. Furthermore I'm a writer and words come easily to me.

After a month of struggle, the sheet was still blank. I'd heard members share how they had dreaded this step, sweated blood and tears, but finally completed their inventory. Why couldn't I?

I must be in denial, I thought. Or maybe too cowardly to go through the pain. My failure reinforced my feelings of inadequacy.

Now, after fifteen years of abstinence and umpteen inventories, I have a different perspective.

Back then I was a person with low self-worth who had lost about thirty percent of body weight in a short time by a rigid

diet. I had been stripped of defenses and exposed to a radically different belief system. Suddenly I was expected to bare my soul and write about my character defects!

The questions on that list were like pointing fingers. They activated inner critical voices: "You're bad! You're selfish!" Out spewed the guilt and self-hate that had caused my bingeing.

No wonder I froze. Just as my overeating had kept me from suicide and breakdown, my writer's block protected me from psychological rape.

I have been told resentment is my number one killer. I've since discovered that it's guilt. In order to resent, you have to blame others. My parents taught me that everything is my fault. I felt guilty about being imperfect, others' mistakes, wanting pleasure, being assertive. Sometimes I felt guilty about *not* feeling guilty!

I was told to write about character defects like envy and greed. Envy requires that you

believe you deserve more than you have. I felt I deserved nothing. I decided I'd had enough of judgement and wrote about my assets instead.

1. Do you acknowledge the many things you do right?
2. Do you tell yourself what a great person you are?
3. Are you your own best friend?
4. Do you buy yourself what you need?
5. Do you give yourself time to rest, relax, and play?
6. Do you nurture your body and your mind?
7. Are you gentle with yourself in evaluating your first efforts in learning a new skill?
8. Do you surround yourself with loving friends who want only the best for you?
9. Do you realize you are okay and that you don't have to do anything to become okay?
10. Do you believe you are entitled to the best that life has to offer? That nothing is too good for you? That your Higher Power has miracles in store for you?

Long-buried memories came flooding back. I was able to easily recall blunders because I saw them with the eyes of

compassion instead of self-condemnation.

Since then I've learned to love myself as I am, to accept praise graciously, and to celebrate my achievements instead of discounting them. A major milestone was being able to look in the mirror and say, "I love you."

Completing step four is supposed to bring a balanced view of ourselves. That's what humility is, seeing ourselves right-sized. My distorted self-appraisal needed to be healed with questions that evoke self-love, not reinforce self-hate. I did not come to OA needing to deflate an overblown ego, but rather to build a healthy sense of self.

As with every stage in my recovery, growth came when I was ready. Pressure only slows me down. The more I appreciate myself, the more often painful memories pop up, and the more openly I share. My honesty increases in direct proportion to my gentleness. When I affirm myself and cooperate with H.P., my life unfolds effortlessly.

My recovery is not about feeling heroic by tearing myself down. It's about joy and love and taking care of myself.

Anonymous, California



Minutes – Freedom Intergroup Meeting March 14, 2009

Freedom Intergroup Chairperson, Jeannine opened meeting with Serenity Prayer.

Those present were: Barbara Joy (Holiday) Newsletter/12th Step Within, Peggy (NPR) Sat. AM, Grace (PR)

Vice Chair/ Temp. Secretary, Beth (NPR) Mon. PM, Dolores (Lecanto) Mon. 3PM, Nancy (Zhills) Literature, Mon PM B Book, Carole G (Odessa) Treas., Francisca (BHills) Thurs. 1PM, Julie L (Hernando) Fri. PM, Sharon T (Zhills) Fri Mtg., Marce (Zhills) Fri Mtg., Belinda(Hernando) Bridge to Serenity Mtg.

Minutes were read & accepted.

Tradition 3-read out of Tradition Pamphlet by Sharon

Treasurers' Report given by Carole \$523.33 balance. Motion made and seconded to accept report as given. Motion accepted.

Region 8 Report-Carole will be attending the Assembly/Convention in Little Rock, March 27th-29th.

WSO Report-Questionnaire completed by most groups. Signed by Chair & sent back.

Retreat Committee Report – “Acceptance” May 1st-3rd at Franciscan Retreat Center. Notice will be in May Lifeline re: our retreat. Discussion re: massage therapist .

Event Sat 3/21 Sharathon in St.Pete

Soar 8 Little Rock

Speaker Marathon 4/18 Clearwater

Newsletter now available @ oafreedom.org

12th Step Within-Went to new Tues. Mtg in Brooksville, will revisit Hernando Cty soon. BJ sends E-Mails re: Things to do on the 12th of each month. Suggested that each meeting go through “We Care” Phone List & call those missing. Cards “Is Food a problem for You!” available to post or leave as a PI 12th Step Within in action.

Literature Report-Nancy going to Maine for the summer. Bring Literature orders to next I.G. Meeting or send to nancyricpage@aol.com

Francisca asked for suggestions for 18 yr Anniversary Event in Citrus Cty. For her meeting in Beverly Hills.

Old Business-T-Shirts have sold 15 or 16 of the original 25, maybe will order more before May Retreat. BJ will bring in the Catalogue with colors @ April IG Mtg.

Discussion re: updates on their individual groups. Fri 3/13, Zhills Mtg had 14 there! Wed AM Unity Church Meeting has between 1 – 5 attendees. Sat IS Pioneers Mtg attendance is up! Mon. Nite Zhills BB Meeting, changing words: alcohol to food, bar to bakery, spree to binge, he too she. 7 Or 8 from their mtg went to State Convention. Fri Spring Hill 1PM Meeting-hard to get people there @ 1PM on a Fri. Dolores from Lecanto “Voices of Recovery” Mtg. Mon. 3PM average 4-5 up to 9-12 sometimes..

Discussion re: BB is “our” Foundation-50 years ago when OA started it were the only literature available.

Closed meeting with Lord's Prayer.

FREEDOM INTERGROUP MEETING LIST

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
<u>CITRUS</u>				
00114	Mon.	3:00pm	Voices of Recovery Central Citrus Community Center 2808 Marknighton Ct. Lecanto, FL	Delores 352-746-5019
45245	Tues.	3:00pm	Solutions Inverness Lakes Regional Public Library 1511 Druid Rd. Inverness, FL	Maralyn 352-726-9112
29089	Thurs.	1:00pm	Our Lady of Grace Church 6 Roosevelt Blvd. Beverly Hills	Francisca 352-746-7749
40614	Fri.	7:00pm	Our Lady of Grace Church 6 Roosevelt Blvd. Beverly Hills	Carolyn 352-341-0777
<u>HERNANDO</u>				
50348	Tues.	1:00pm	Bridge to Serenity W. Hernando Branch Library 6335 Blackbird Ave. Brooksville, FL	Belinda 352-293-3455
50203	Thurs.	7:00pm	Road to Recovery Meeting Dayspring Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall 6000 Mariner Blvd Spring Hill, FL 34609	Karen 352-200-8433
08937	Fri.	1:00pm	Saint Andrews Episcopal Church Spring Hill/corner Deltona & Fulton	Betty 352-666-1710
<u>PASCO</u>				
27737	Mon.	7:00pm	Calvary Chapel (room 110) 6825 Trouble Creek Rd New Port Richey	Barbara 727-937-1964
50159	Mon.	5:30pm	Florida Hospital of Pasco County Big Book meeting 7050 Gall Blvd., Zephyrhills	Sue 813-788-6479
20719	Wed.	10:00am	Unity Church 5844 Pine Hill Rd. Port Richey	Peggy 727-817-0017
45421	Fri.	11:30am	Florida Hospital of Pasco County 7050 Gall Blvd Zephyrhills	Sharon 813-782-6005
17950	Sat.	10:00am	Unity Church 5844 Pine Hill Dr. Port Richey	Jeannine 727-849-3048

FREEDOM INTERGROUP MEETING

2nd Saturday of each month 9:00am Unity Church, 5844 Pine Hill Dr., Port Richey. HOTLINE # 1-800-544-6353