

## OA Step Six

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

*"In practice, step six turns out to be one of the most difficult of the twelve steps, because SAYING we're entirely ready and BEING entirely ready are two very different things. (P. 53) ..Some of us...act as if it's up to us to remove our own shortcomings...Thus we learn a key truth...We are powerless over each of our defects of character, just as we are powerless over food. It will be up to a Power greater than ourselves to remove them from us; we can't do it alone." (P. 55), OA 12 & 12, First Edition*

## Focus on Step Six Principle: WILLINGNESS

### A Member's Story

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

The main principle of Step Six is willingness, which has to do with willpower and determination. Willingness is defined as the quality or state of being prepared to do something.

Most of us have strong willpower and self-will in other areas. We have dieted for long periods of time on self-will alone. Each of us in our own way finds that self-will not only "runs riot," but also is *not* able to carry us for the long run.

Many people confuse being willing to and *wanting to*. People say, "I am waiting until I want to do the Fourth Step." That usually doesn't happen. I have rarely seen these people later in meetings. *Being* entirely ready is different from *saying* we are entirely ready.

Step Six is similar to Step One: an admission that something is undesirable and needs to be changed.

We are just as powerless over our character defects as we are over food. By the way, what are our character defects? A short definition includes old self-destructive behaviors or behavior patterns.

However, all of us have the power to change a single thought. Taking the list of defects from Step Five, I find their opposites: for example, love for hate or gratitude for self-pity. Then when I notice a defect "arriving," I simply replace it with the positive opposite. When I first started working Steps Six and Seven, I found myself replacing sometimes dozens to hundreds of times a day. It was work! I'm glad I only focused on one or two defects at a time, slowly working myself through the list.

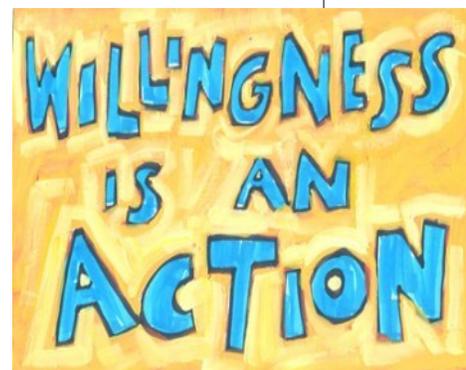
The difference today is that when a character defect pops up, I now can a) recognize it within that day, b) see how it is harming me, and c) release it and go on to the next right action/thought. In early recovery, the first few times I worked through the steps, this process took me months and/or years. This

month, it took me less than a minute.

Some of us have fear when approaching Steps Six and Seven because we are afraid of losing *all* our character defects and having to live up to our personal expectations of perfection. From my limited experience (from 1979), I can clearly and unequivocally say that no one I have met, especially myself, loses all the character defects. Ever! And new ones appear. So, put those fears aside.

Pretty amazing! Thanks, Higher Power!

— Barbara



Registration is open — Sign up today!

## June 2018

### Announcements

**June 2 & July 7**  
Step of the Month meeting  
9:45 am, Church of Reconciliation, Alban Room

**June 16 & July 14**  
Intergroup  
9:45 am, Church of Reconciliation

**June 9 & July 14**  
Newcomer/Welcome Back meeting  
9:45 am, Church of Reconciliation, Alban Room

**June 8-10, Slumber Falls Retreat**

Oasanantonio dotcom.wordpress.com; click on Announcements/ Alerts and Slumber Falls Retreat Flyer.

## Principle Six— Members Share on Willingness

*“When we work step six, we dedicate ourselves to a lifetime of growth and change. Being entirely ready means that we are completely willing to recognize and let go of our defective behavior patterns, and to let God change us as God will. We don’t set the timetable or method for these changes...Our work is to do what we can to make ourselves ready, by actively reaching for recovery and putting ourselves in the frame of mind to receive God’s help (P. 56)...A willingness to change is the essence of step six.” (P. 57), OA 12 & 12, First Edition*

**For the Step 6 Principle of Willingness, tell about a way that you have “firmly turned our backs on the old, self-destructive behavior and made every effort to act and live by the principles embodied in the 12 steps”....(OA 12&12, p. 56)**

For me, a paradox in 12-Step recovery is that while “ours is a program of action,” it is carried out largely through “non-action”—that is, through a “surrender” of my self-propelled action that has always gotten me into trouble, usually becoming “self-will run riot.” So in recovery, the “way” that I have discovered to “make every effort to act and live” in a new, non-destructive, abstinent manner has been the “way-less Way” (as the Taoists call it) of a Step 11 *daily practice of prayer and meditation* to improve my conscious contact with God. It is “way-less” in that I don’t set the way as I love to do (“My way or the highway!”), but simply **open myself in silent receptivity**, for 15-20 minutes, to my HP’s Presence and Action within me, doing whatever (S)he pleases to untangle my character defects through a “Divine therapy” that I can never accomplish on my own by “will power” or “willfulness.” The opening to this divine therapy is actually the opposite of willfulness: **willingness**. And even the willingness, born of a *desire* for change, is a **gift** of my Higher Power, received when I am **open**. For me, prayer and meditation form the “way-less Way” to this *openness* to **God’s action**. Then, up off the cushion and into life, mine truly becomes a “program of action.”

### Newcomer’s Corner

#### Tools of Recovery—Plan of Eating

If you are expecting a diet plan, recipe section or required guide of what to eat, you will not find it in OA today. Instead, OA suggests a plan of eating to “help us abstain from compulsive eating. This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and achieve physical recovery.” (From oa.org, Tools of Recovery page.)

OA publishes a pamphlet *Dignity of Choice*, which “provides

**Why has it been hard to part with a defect? And what good have I seen as the result of letting go of that defect? (adapted from OA 12&12 workbook, p. 39)**

It has been hard to part with my character defects because I have felt somehow (either consciously or unconsciously) that they served me. For example, my defect of impatient criticism has given me an illusion of “power and control” in many situations, where “My way or the highway!” (self-will) prevailed and therefore I “won” or “got my way.” Working the Steps in Program, I came to see this as a character defect that manifested *willfulness*, the opposite of willingness. The next hurdle—after being open and honest enough to see the defect of impatient criticism—was my natural tendency to try to eliminate it *by my own power*. **Fail!** Again, **willingness** rather than willfulness was required: the willingness to allow my Higher Power to do the “heavy lifting” of my great big ego, according to a Higher means and Higher timetable than my own. Again, taking this defect to *prayer and silent meditation with HP day after day*, striving only for **receptivity**, things began to shift. The defect of impatient criticism is by no means totally gone, but I have “let it go” more and more in my daily meditation, and there are two good results: 1) a more peaceful and harmonious relationship with my spouse and others close to me who were formerly targets of my impatient criticism; 2) with abstinence supported by the release of character defects, with this “way-less Way” I “weigh less”!

**“A willingness to change is the essence of Step Six.” (OA 12&12, p. 57) Can you tell how that relates to your recovery?**

The Big Book assures me that anyone can recover who is “willing to grow along spiritual lines.” To me, “spiritual growth” means **change** or **transformation** that occurs along the line of *surrender to a Higher Power than the self*. So “willingness” as a spiritual principle involves **self-emptying**, whereas “willfulness” (my food-addicted approach to life) is a “**fullness**” of **self**, as the word suggests. In Program, I was challenged by a call to “willingness”: willingness to change, to open to the unknown, to question, to look honestly at myself, to leave behind old ideas and behaviors, to accept instruction and help, and to *Let Go, Let Come, Let Be*—accepting Reality as it is in this moment. I have found that “a willingness to change” has an **element of mystery** to it. I don’t know how or why—after so many years of abusing food—the day arrived when I was “willing” to enter Program and start working the Steps. This mystery of the **miraculous inner shift from willfulness to willingness** that occurs and puts us on the road to recovery, is itself a work of grace, a gift of my Higher Power, enabling me to relinquish the reins and *let God do for me what I can never do for myself*. Because I perceive it as a gift of God and not something I can “muster” on my own, I find it important to **pray for the willingness to be willing**, one day at a time.

guidance to both new and longtime OA members in devising their own plans of eating.”

A *Plan of Eating* pamphlet discusses a plan of eating as a tool, offers a way to examine our eating history, and examines binge foods and compulsive eating behaviors.

#### Tools of Recovery—Meetings

Does your recovery need a jump start or a boost? You might consider changing up or adding to your meeting schedule. You might implement “30 in 30”, meaning

30 meetings in 30 days.

“Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution through the Twelve Steps and share the gifts we receive through this program. In addition to face to face, OA offers telephone and online meetings.” (oa.org, Tools of Recovery page.)

**What OA tools are you WILLING to use for your recovery today?**



## San Antonio Area Intergroup—Service Board

SAAI is duly registered with the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous.

Our primary purpose is to aid those with the problem of compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous and to serve and represent the OA groups from which the Intergroup is formed.

SAAI can be reached in the following ways:

Phone: 210.492.5400

Email: [news@oasanantonio.com](mailto:news@oasanantonio.com)

US mail:  
SAAI  
PO Box 5458  
San Antonio, TX 78201

### 2017-2018 Board

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## SAAI Standing Committees

SAAI has standing and special committees to carry out its purposes in an effective and efficient manner.

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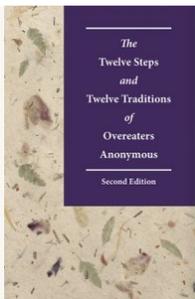
Sponsorship  
IDEA Day  
Unity Day  
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OA and AA literature can be ordered and picked up at Intergroup meetings.  
[Literature forms online](#)

Place literature order at:  
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Want to receive The Swan/  
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## World Service News



**New Edition Available!**

**The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, SECOND EDITION**

The World Service Office has announced the availability of a new edition of the OA 12 & 12. According to WSO, it has been revised for clarity and inclusiveness, and Step 4 has been re-structured to increase usefulness.

**Ask for the new edition** at your face to face meeting! **LARGE PRINT AVAILABLE, too** — order online at [oa.org](http://oa.org).

The **2018 World Service Business Conference** met in Albuquerque, NM, in late April. There were 188 voting delegates and 17 countries represented. Delegates received electronic and hard copy binders containing hundreds of pages of information to become familiar with prior to the meeting.

The link below is a recap of the business conducted.  
<https://oa.org/files/pdf/Wrap-Up-Report-18-1.pdf>

Of note:  
-Multiple edits to literature were considered and bylaws changes were considered.  
-Neva S. elected Region III trustee.  
-Our Region III had 67% of our region intergroups represented.

**Thank you to our local WSO rep, Mary Rose J and to 187 other delegates !**

## Region III Convention News

**Convention Dates:** March 19-21, 2019. Save the Dates!

**Theme:** Steppin' Up—OA in SA  
*Take your program to a new level*

The Region III Convention committee met recently to continue the work of establishing a convention budget.

**Convention Chair:** Elaine L  
Questions? Please e-mail [elangstl@aol.com](mailto:elangstl@aol.com)

*"No longer will we allow fear to keep us from doing what is best for us. (P. 57)..Our commitment to embrace the needed changes in ourselves has given us an extraordinary power to deal with life's challenges...From now on, we will strive to keep ourselves entirely ready for any transformations our Higher Power wants to bring about in us. Having such an attitude, we cannot fail...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." (P. 58)*  
OA 12 & 12, First Edition

## A Member's Musings

*I wanted to share one of my favorite readings on willingness from the Voices of Recovery - Page 46, February 15.*

"Surrender, then, is an unconscious event. It is not willed by the individual. It can occur only when one becomes involved with one's unconscious mind in a set of circumstances which signal the undeniable need for an external greater power. The definition of surrender can be understood only when all its unconscious ramifications and true inner meanings are glimpsed. Observed by others, such an individual manifests an inner calm and a "live and let live" attitude.  
Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, P. 239

I felt relieved when I read this passage. It meant I could not control my surrender process. I could only be willing and do the footwork. By attending OA meetings, calling other OA members, reading, writing, and working the Steps, I became teachable and put myself in a set of circumstances that signaled the undeniable need for an external greater power. I began to see that my going on a diet every Monday, New Year's Day, and birthday didn't work...I had to be willing to let go, or surrender, and take the first three steps.

About thirteen months after my first meeting, surrender happened one July morning. I just quit. I got sick and tired of being sick and tired."

"I'm grateful to OA and pray for continued surrender, abstinence, and a wonderful life, one day at a time."

-GM

## The Meet Up

SUN	5:00 P.M.	Lynn G. (210) 240-3277	University United Methodist Church Main Entrance Second Floor, Room 210 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson) 78230	Step Study/ Discussion and Speaker (2nd Sun)
SUN	7:00 P.M.	Elaine (210) 332-0551	Unity Church 408 Gruene Road, New Braunfels, 78130	<b>New meeting! Begins May 6</b>
MON	9:30 A.M.	Vera C. (210) 494-2713	Shearer Hills Baptist Church North Building, Room 128, Interpark Entrance, 12615 San Pedro 78216	Literature: Currently Big Book
	7:00 P.M.	Graciela (210) 219-9660	La Iglesia El Divino Redentor 2803 W. Salinas, 78207	Literatura/ Discussion
	7:30 P.M.	Ken R. (210) 520-3727	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church 6110 NW Loop 410 78238	Discussion
TUES	7:00 P.M.	Noé G. (210) 392-8031	Alamo Heights Baptist Church 6501 Broadway 78209	12 & 12 Study/ Discussion
WED	12:00 P.M.	Kay (404) 286-9169	Unity Church of the Hill Country, 1016 Jefferson St., Library, <b>Kerville</b> 78028	Steps/Traditions
	7:30 P.M.	Barbara D. (210) 637-7203	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room, 8900 Starcrest 78217	Step Study New-comers' Ask It Basket
THURS	12:00 P.M.	Mary Helen (210) 534-5875	Crestholme Presbyterian Church 1602 Goliad- Room right behind church	Discussion
	7:00 P.M.	Kristy (512) 393-1366	Unity Church, Life Room, 408 Gruene Rd. <b>New Braunfels</b> 78130	Step Study
FRI	9:30 A.M.	Gwen (210) 862-8211	N.E. Christian Church 2839 Woodbury (at Nacadoches) 78217 (.6 miles outside Loop 410)	Literature Discussion Speaker 2nd Fri.
	12 Noon	Destine (956) 744-5011	Christ Church Episcopal 2320 Lane St. <b>Laredo</b>	English/Spanish
	7:00 P.M.	Dawn C. (210) 849-0027	University United Methodist Church Main Entrance Second Floor, Room S211, 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson) 78230	Speaker/ Step Study/ Discussion
SAT	8:30 A.M.	Sharon V. (210) 863-3338	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest 78217	Literature/ Discussion
1st SAT	9:45 A.M.	Kathy S. (510) 506-1756	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest 78217	Step of the Month
2nd SAT	9:45 A.M.	Curtis (210) 487-1683	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest 78217	SAAI Newcomer/ "Welcome Back"

**Have an idea for The Swan/El Cisne? Want to contribute content for an upcoming issue?**

**Contact co-editors:** Alice at playswithwordz@gmail.com; Carrie at oacarrie@gmail.com