



## SPECIAL FOCUS: How Step Study Groups Benefit Our Recovery

After the Intergroup renewal workshop, six of us in the same home group decided to start a step study group In March, using the *Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide* which is new OA literature [ed. see sidebar]. Our breakout group decided we would share the benefits of being in a step group to hopefully reach all newcomers and those that may be struggling with their recovery.

**Our step study involves reading, reflecting, writing, discussion and, of course, action!** In addition, participants are expected to also attend their regular OA meetings, make outreach calls and work with their sponsors. We have taken turns in leading in order for each of us to have an opportunity to give service.

As we are all from the same OA home group, we knew each other fairly well but because of this Step study we now find ourselves very much closer to each other and all have a renewed commitment to our recoveries. The support to each other has been wonderful and we have all had lots of 'Aha' moments and broken through some barriers and resistance.

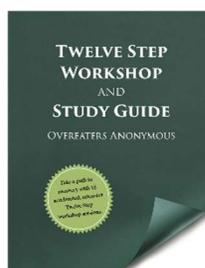
There are lots of available Step study guides. Our particular group met before the first session and mutually decided which guide to use. **In a Step Study, we work the Steps rather than just study or read them.** As a result, we can grow and change and become more and more willing to recover. We learn that only the first half of Step One has anything to do with food and compulsive eating. The rest of the Steps all deal with living.

**For us, working the steps has been our path to recovery and given each of us truly fabulous partners in recovery.** I know for myself that I always ate to feel better but ALWAYS felt worse. I learned that any permission giving or justifying is my disease talking. One bite of an addictive substance is suicide for me. Working and living the Steps along with walking hand in hand with my Higher Power has been the solution for me. First, I had to have complete acceptance that I am a compulsive overeater and then surrender to a new way of life.

**Are you interested in starting or joining a step-study?** A good way to get started is to speak during a meeting's "any announcements" time. State you are either looking to join a step study or interested in helping start a step study. Consider inviting newcomers personally after the meeting and explaining what a step-study is. Find a location that allows privacy. Set a time to have your initial meeting to mutually decide which step-study material to use, time/day and duration of the sessions. Currently our group has six members meeting twice a month on Sunday afternoon from 4-6 pm with the location of the meetings alternating between two members' homes. We are covering two steps per month (step 4 was six weeks) and will meet until the early fall.

If you are interested in knowing more about how to start or join a step-study, please ask within your home group as many people have been involved in them and would be happy to share their experiences. -MJ and LC

*Editor's Note:* if you are starting a new step study group, please let us know at [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com) so we can put a note in the newsletter and other interested fellows can join you.



The OA Step Study Guide is designed to be used with the Big Book, OA 12 & 12, the daily readers, etc. and includes a leader's script for each session as well as pages to be photocopied for all group members for "homework" between sessions. Copies can be purchased through Intergroup. There is also a popular OA Big Book Step Study by Lawrie C, available for free online at [www.oabigbook.info](http://www.oabigbook.info)

## SPONSORSHIP: Are You Doing It Right?

I had been feeling really confused about being a sponsor recently, not sure about whether I was doing enough, whether I was helping the fellows that I was working with in their recovery. I felt that the sponsees that I had didn't stay in program; those that did, I wasn't sure I was instilling 'the message' of recovery. In short, **I was restless, irritated, and discontent regarding my ability to sponsor.** I thought I should stop the service of sponsorship, because I wasn't doing it right.

I needed help, but I didn't know where to go. The people I talked to said I was doing a good job, but I didn't want to believe them—I'm willful that way. And my sponsor told me to give it up to my higher power and let the response be my guide. I realize now that I had listened to her, but I didn't hear her. So I kept on going in this funk, letting myself (and my program) suffer because of this self-doubt. **One day, my sponsor's words over the preceding weeks and months finally sunk in, and I decided to ask my Higher Power for help.** Finally, I was willing to hear advice from my Sponsor, and when I was willing to do the next right thing, the answer came from my Higher Power.

**I remembered the Sponsorship Kit I got when I was first asked to take on this service by my sponsor.** Reading through the instructions and advice in the kit, I realized that I was indeed a sponsor; but there was more that I could do, with specific ideas and instructions to make sponsorship easier and more effective for all involved. It's an amazing tool to use, and I recommend it.

If you are thinking of sponsoring, please give it a try after a good check-in with your sponsor and your higher power. If your meeting has a need for sponsors, remember that anyone can sponsor to the level of their ability... the Sponsorship Kit not only taught me that, but reminded me of that as well. Many fellows have different opinions about this, but **I think that any member who has completed the fearless moral inventory of Step 4 to the best of their ability and is abstinent can sponsor newcomers in the program to help them understand the first three steps.** I put myself up as a temporary sponsor for the first time before completing my first set of steps. No one asked me to be their sponsor, but I know that the change in me, in my willingness, helped my program.

*The Sponsorship Kit can be ordered through the OA Sea to Sky Intergroup if there is no copy available at your meeting. -Tim C.*



**One way to determine whether you are ready to sponsor may be to ask yourself: "Do I have experience, strength, and hope to share?"** If you are considering sponsorship, although not required, it is strongly recommended that you: a. have a sponsor yourself; b. discuss with your sponsor the possibility of your sponsoring someone; c. read through the OA literature mentioned above; d. discuss with your sponsor specifically any request for sponsorship before saying yes, including your expectations. A sponsor is simply one OA member working with another member to better understand and live the Twelve-Step program. There are many different styles of sponsoring. The key to being a sponsor is to share one's experience, strength, and hope as it relates to OA's Twelve-Step program. Negotiating expectations between a potential sponsee and sponsor is important for the relationship to be successful. Together, we get better!