

# SHADES OF GREY

June 1, 1989 | 50¢

## THE STEP UP

STEP THREE: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

The very first step I encountered was Step Three without even knowing it. When I joined greysheet O.A., I decided that in all matters touching upon food, I turned my life over to the care, protection, and guidance of OA. I might not have been ready to admit out loud that I was powerless over food, that my life was unmanageable, or that I was insane at all, no less in need of being restored sanity. But cup, scale, and spoon abstinence save me something extremely practical that I could do about my food addiction.

Step Three is the first of the action steps. The act of weighing and measuring became a habit, thank God, but in the meantime the recovery process began to happen, and I now believe I take the first three steps three times a day in front of my cup and scale.

And Step Three doesn't end with the food. It reminds me to use what help is at hand. And to try to see the evidence of God's work in my life. Each time I read devotional books I am reminded to try and align my will to that of a Higher Power. And lately I have been feeling the need for quiet time to listen for HP's guidance. Sometimes I panic. I willingly turn my will (to be eating all the time) over to the care of God (or OA, if you like), but I think I must figure out the rest of my decisions (career/school especially right now for me). A full morning of this kind of thinking is enough to kill my

spirit for the day. There is little I can do to control outcomes. I can try to make positive choices, but my main job is to remember I don't have control of the situation. I can pray to be shown which way to go. Pain (or frustration, indecision), action then prayer. This seems to work.

Allison K.  
NY, NY

## WE ARE A TEAM

It's springtime..baseball season...The time of year when team playing is everywhere. One of the things I love best about the Greysheet community is that together we work at what works. Together, as a team, we accomplish our primary purpose--weighing and measuring our food without exception and NOT EATING NO MATTER WHAT ONE DAY AT A TIME.

The most helpful thing that I ever heard from anyone in our community was "focus on the food and turn my head off". How effective it was to have a top priority..a chief objective...No matter where I was or what I was doing I always knew what was most important.

Now almost two years later I believe in my heart that we've been graced with a priceless, precious gift; one which is worth going to any lengths to protect. If it hadn't been for all the support and encouragement I got and continue to get, I never could have made it.

I cherish our "freedom from bondage". Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to save my life. God bless us all!

Go team!

Denise V.  
Astoria, NY

## "CAMBRIDGE MASS."

When food causes fire to burn under your ass  
That's when you'll travel to Cambridge Mass.  
When your body's just a big Incredible mass  
That's when you'll travel to Cambridge Mass.  
When the sidewalk's too narrow for people to pass  
That's when you'll travel to Cambridge Mass.  
When your addiction's the carrot and you're the Jackass  
That's when you'll travel to Cambridge Mass.  
You'll get yourself a sponsor; a Grey Sheet lass  
There's plenty of them waiting in Cambridge Mass.  
You'll eat from the Grey Sheet with style and class  
There's plenty to learn up in Cambridge Mass.  
Down through the stages of fat you will pass  
There's miracles happening in Cambridge Mass.  
You'll find yourself back at the head of the class  
So get yourself abstinent up in Cambridge Mass!

Duffy  
- Sweden

## GREY SHEET AWAY

My last abstinent vacation enforced my belief that grey sheet abstinence can be taken anywhere. For me, I needed my commitment, my cup, scale, tablespoon, and my Higher Power. Traveling to Africa and Egypt was exciting and frightening. It was so wonderful to talk to other Grey Sheetters whom had gone before me and obtain helpful information. With the help of my sponsor and the group, I was able to prepare for this adventure. Needless to say, I had a wonderful and learning abstinent experience. Thank you Grey Sheet O.A.

Maria P.  
Queens, N.Y.

HELLO  
GREYSHEETERS!

I weigh and measure 3 meals a day off of the Greysheet, commit them to a sponsor as best I can, I don't eat no matter what, and abstinence is definitely the most important thing in my life. I am sitting here on the train to New York to attend the Saturday morning Grey Sheet meeting and I can't believe how blessed I am. The amazing thing is that I don't always stop to think about it. The Grey Sheet offers me three beautiful meals a day in which I can love and take care of myself like I never could before. Sometimes I don't believe I deserve all the good I have in my life and I don't understand it. All that I know is that I've been W & M without exception for 9 months and I'm still here to tell about it! Even more, it is all a result of W & M and going to any lengths to keep my abstinence. Thank God I believed or "acted as if I believed" that things would get better. Thank God I "heard" what beautiful lives people were leading because they were weighing and measuring and trying to be true to themselves. Somewhere there was a little glimmer of faith that grew and blossomed as I attended some more meetings and weighed and measured for "just one more day".

When I made a decision to do Grey Sheet I was not sure. I'd say, "But the only way I'll ever know if this is what I want is to try something else to compare". Then my sponsor would say, "The only way that you will know if GS is for you is to try it". She was right. I'm glad I

listened. I am glad I trusted, for that's the bottom line. In trusting I have gotten so much back. I hope I can remember this in other areas of my life.

I don't always feel so great and so willing I don't always want to be a food addict. I get frustrated at times and get upset that the GS community is in NY while I'm in NJ. But thank God I hang on any way. The greatest and sometimes only way I can show faith is to w & m. So thank God at least three times a day I perform an act of faith.

Today I do have a community of people I call in NY, Boston, and New Jersey! It's hard work - it is always hard work - putting down the food, keeping down the food, and trying to recover. I need lots of help. Keep it up people in England and Mexico and other places where the community is small or just one person, for there's nothing better than going to bed at night and waking up in the morning knowing that you've been true to yourself and to your disease.

There is no limit to what I can become and do today as long as I put w & m and the 12 steps of recovery first.

Valerie  
- New Jersey

DATING

There was nothing more uncomfortable to me than dating, and Grey Sheet was offering me the perfect excuse not to. How could I? A cup and scale in public on a date? As if the whole restaurant and everyone on the street within a 50 mile radius would look at ME. Boy was I surprised to find out no one cared, not even my date. I was looking and asking for questions from them and found myself volunteering more information than was needed.

Today, those first dates remain in my memory. Some I'll see again, some I won't, but I am abstinent. I did not worry over dinner if I ate too much or too little, and was more engrossed in conversation and the person with me. There was a great deal of relief in being honest about who I am from the very start. It was not necessary to tell them my whole history, and I was able to present me as I really am, not a lie or a flirtation. Because of this, these men responded by being open and honest with me, allowing sincere relationships to form. I didn't have to worry about presenting someone I fantasized about showing -- just me.

Because of Grey Sheet, I have friendships today I never dreamed could occur, and I am accepted; cup, scale, and all!

Grey Sheet is not just a food plan, but a measurement which opens the door of recovery into all areas of my life.

Adina K.  
Millburn, NJ.

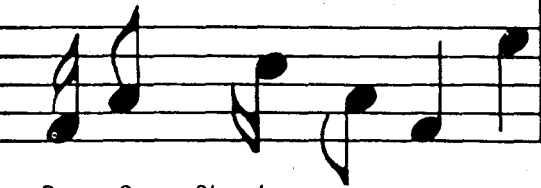
Dear Adina,

It's been a sheer pleasure receiving "Shades of Grey". Just to know that others are weighing and measuring without exception fills my heart with joy and strengthens my spirit. The Grey Sheet leaves no room for error, or indecision, or obsession. It's clean living, guided by spiritual tools that place God exactly where He belongs in my life -- between me and the food, between me and the first compulsive bite, between me and my character defects. As long as HP is there, and I'm willing to let Him in, there's no confusion. I'm so used to walking around in a "Grey fog". Today I walk around with a "Grey Sheet". As you can tell, I'm very grateful to be given this chance at life. I just celebrated my 7th back to back abstinent anniversary. I work my steps, and my life. Over time, I've been able to incorporate my addictions - alcohol, food, drugs, debting, into one disease that manifests itself in all these areas. As such, I work Steps 1 - 12 thoroughly on ALL my life issues. It works for me. I still need to talk with other C.O's and specifically with people who choose the discipline of weighing and measuring. This is the only way I stay abstinent. I also get my Grey Sheet infusions when I return to Cambridge, MA meetings. Is that a treat!

My abstinence has taken me on and through some incredible experiences. I weigh and measure everywhere! I work on Capitol Hill, weigh and measure breakfasts and lunches and dinners in the Capitol of the United States; in front of or next to Congressmen, Senators, or fellow lobbyists. No matter what! Sometimes it draws attention, but most times it becomes part of the breakfast or luncheon or dinner process. When asked, I no longer have the need to explain how sick I am or was but rather say "it's just what I do to take care of myself".

The most difficult times for me in preparing my favorite meals comes when I'm just plain tired. "Fast meals" just don't do it for me physically, emotionally, spiritually. As I find balance in my full life, I am learning how to best take care of myself. Cooking my food ahead and preparing a lot of salad really helps.

(Con't on page 4)



Dear Grey Sheet,

How nice it is to have our own newsletter, in which we can share the experience, strength, and hope obtained through long-term, back-to-back weighing and measuring without exception. The first issue I read was waiting for me in New Haven along with a "welcome home" letter from one of my sponsees when I got back from two weeks in the Soviet Union. So imagine my surprise and delight when I saw Deanna's letter about her trip to Moscow. It further reaffirmed my deep conviction that there are no coincidences in this program--my higher power had obviously talked to Deanna's higher power because he knew that what I needed to hear upon returning to the States was a tough-to-get tomatoes and disgusting cucumbers story. For me, as for so many of us, the roughest part of the ordeal with the food comes not during it but after it. This is the time when, more than ever, I need to talk about my food in the smallest detail, be scrupulously honest in every way, and enjoy the warmth, love, and wisdom so generously given to me at Grey Sheet meetings and during telephone conversations with GS friends.

During these two weeks in Leningrad and Moscow, I reaped the rewards of over seven years of abstinence on the GS. I was my second abstinent to the USSR, so I knew the ropes (and how to get Russian friends to pull them for me) and was able to make Grey Sheet food appear where there was none (one of those invaluable tricks inherited

from my binge-vomiting days). That left me free to enjoy one of the richest human experiences I have ever had. Several years of weighing and measuring my food without exception and working the steps of this program have made me not only available physically, mentally, and spiritually, but eager for new encounters and horizons. Because of the suffering this disease has made me endure and the joy of daily rebirth through three weighed and measured meals, coupled with constant effort and vigilance to get my food right, I am well equipped to feel deep compassion and love as well as limitless curiosity for a people and a culture I have been involved with for the past fourteen years. I was also able to be a reliable leader for the twelve students entrusted to my care--a very far cry, as those in this program who have heard my story will attest, from my pre-GS incarnation. My husband's reaction to "Shades of Grey": "That's a great ideal!"

Catherine L.  
- New Haven, CT

#### SOBER LIVING

I don't know the how or why, but I do know that I increase in what I would call sober living and I believe it is because of weighed and measured GS abstinence.

I think the title of this newsletter is interesting because when I say "grey sheet abstinence" that means different things to different people - that is, there are many versions of grey sheet, but there is a basic sameness with which we all identify - and that seems to be the principle of what grey sheet abstinence is.

It is that principle that leads me to this sober living that is such a miracle in my life. Because of my abstinence, I live in a state of growing through the 12 steps of recovery. I had tried many, many food plans before I made the surrender to grey sheet and none of them opened the steps of recovery to me, because somehow, somehow, I was still connected to the disease - still into the illness that set up a block in my recovery.

But grey sheet was surrender. That is the principle that we all share. Grey sheet had thought of every escape and had shut the door on all of them. All of the other food plans still had some element of the disease to cater to - but with grey sheet all of those compulsive doors shut down.

Because of grey sheet I am now recovering through the steps. Most recently, after over two years of abstinence, I finally surrendered my self will in regard to resentment and control. What a beginning I am making there! I had two resentments that just drove me crazy - always thinking about the people, and acting out my resentments by snubbing them, or by talking about them to others - always judging and always feeling miserable. Finally I got sick and tired of that, and I remembered how I got sick and tired of compulsive overeating and was able to take step one with the food - surrender to grey sheet - and what a relief that had given me. I had learned on that level that we really do "surrender to win". And so I decided to surrender with the resentment and the control - go back to step one, two and three and it worked!

The joy of getting out of those resentments is just wonderful! My mind is being free of all the obsessive thinking I had put into them and it is just heaven!

But I know it is all because it began with grey sheet.

There isn't a single day that I am not grateful for abstinence. I have lost 188 pounds now, just about 5 pounds from goal. I have a way to eat that is just marvelous. My sponsor told me long ago to "make good food" and that is what I do. I enjoy every single meal I have. I couldn't say that for the compulsive overeating part of my life. All that ever did for me was make me miserable. Now at last I can truly enjoy food. And to think I use to think that abstinence would deprive me of some sought after pleasure. Not so.

Abstinence gives me life, love, freedom, and growth.

Marian F.  
Manhattan, Kansas

Congratulations on your 8 years of weighing and measuring GS without exception. You're a wonderful sponsor! - from T.E.C

The problem in front of you is never as big as the power behind you - fool of AA

I'll be forever grateful to Tracey T and GS for allowing me to be able to wear a bikini these days!

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O.D.A.T. Page 96

A member once said: "The Twelve Steps were designed for desperate people like us - as a short-cut to God. When we accept them and use them, we find they open the way to using our God-given abilities which we have allowed to lie dormant."

The Steps are like a medicine which many of us won't bother to take, although we know they can heal us of the sickness of despair, frustration, resentment and self-pity. Why is this? It may be we have a deep-rooted desire for martyrdom. Consciously we think we want help, but some dark and hidden sense of guilt makes us crave punishment more than we want relief from our ills.

No one really needs to suffer unhappiness and discontent, or be deprived of good things of life. We can find the way out by daily study of The Twelve Steps. This wholesome spiritual philosophy will help us find our way into the light of a good life.

"I pray for the willingness to accept the difficult discipline of the Twelve Steps. Living with such a guide makes life increasingly worthwhile."

Well, you now know I really exist. I've appreciated your notes and receiving the newsletter. Keep up the good work. I have one suggestion. Since you have a mailing list of grey sheet people, perhaps you can ask in the newsletter if people would be willing to have the list sent out with one of the newsletters so that some of us can write personal letters to one another. I'm particularly interested in getting Linda from Texas address. Please let me know. Also enclosed is a small donation towards your printing and mailing costs.

Again, thanks for all this work. I look forward to my next issue.

In recovery,  
Chris. F  
Washington D.C.  
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(202) 662-1530 w

**BIG BOOK**

And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation - some fact of my life - unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.

Big Book page 449

Congratulations to our English cousins Lief S. and Claire D. on their one year! - AK

Dear Grey Sheet Community,

I hardly know what to say. Never in my life was there one day without the torture of compulsive eating until I met you. You gave me hope when there was none. You gave me strength when I could hardly move. You gave me love when I hated myself. You showed me H.P. when I felt deserted and you gave me laughter through all my tears.

Physically I will be away and will miss you terribly, but I will rely on you more than ever. I, like you, weigh and measure my food without exception no matter what, no matter where. When I am feeling alone in a distant land, I will look inside for the hope, strength, love, H.P., and laughter which you gave me.

"I place my hand in yours, and together we can do something I cannot do alone".

Forever grateful,

  
Adina K.

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Thank you all very much for your contributions to "Shades of Grey" and the wonderful opportunity to serve you. I am traveling to Europe for the next 6 months - 1 year and am happy to say Diane R. is taking the responsibility of Sr. Editor and Manager of "Shades of Grey".

Please send all articles and contributions to:

Diane \_\_\_\_\_

Look for me as your "roving reporter" as I take Grey Sheet away!!