

SHADES OF GREY

March 1, 1989

50¢

THE STEP UP

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

When I came to the Grey Sheet rooms, I didn't have a power greater than myself to use to help me surrender my will around food. I didn't understand how I would do this step, but the sharing in the meetings carried me.

I came to Jan Hus every Tuesday and Friday and I heard, "stop talking to those who do not understand our disease, about our disease."

This made it very clear, that my family was not my Higher Power, neither were my well meaning co-workers, or friends. I heard, "think that first bite all the way through." The several moments of pleasure I might derive from a binge, are not worth the lifetime of remorse that comes with it. I understood that even though I felt like eating, I didn't have to. I learned that my feelings are not my Higher Power either.

And, I heard, "put your abstinence first, and you won't eat." The Grey Sheet community and abstinence itself became my Higher Power, and has kept me abstinent and thankful for what I have. Left to my own thinking, I'll eat. I am not a Higher Power.

The power of the group has carried me through the difficult transition from putting everyone else's needs first, to putting my abstinence first. For a person with a disease, this is sanity.

- Alison K.
New York, NY

I AM A GREYSHEET PERSON

I am a greysheet person. What does that mean to me?

It means weighing and measuring 3 meals off the greysheet without exception and the rest is left up to me...which means eating brussel sprouts with mustard and chopsticks, mixing butter in with wheat germ, and using a spatula to get the last drop of any well-deserved meal. I decorate my desk with a coral placemat and gold silverware at lunch all the while frowning at passersby who threaten to linger too long around my food. I look forward to creamy sweet breakfasts, hot greasy lunches, spicy dinners and freshly brewed gourmet coffee between meals. I am proud of my orange palms and sparkling eyes from naturally consumed beta carotene and I can walk into my closet at anytime and wear anything to a Friday night dinner with the "beautiful people." However, I am most impressed by the fact that whatever happens I get three, huge delicious meals a day without sharing! Baked gjetost, creamy kefir cheese, Marie's buttermilk dressing, toasted soy nuts, roasted sesame seed oil, tofu cheeses, Grace's fried tofu, fried ricotta, chinese eggplant in garlic oil, olive oil fried red cabbage, soft shell crab sauteed in garlic butter, soy flakes and granules in cinnamon and hot buttermilk, Jones sausage with red and yellow fried peppers in basil tomatoe sauce, spicy ovenfried chicken, and the awesome Diane's own oven fried Cat fish are all on the greysheet! I do greysheet according to my sponsor and if she says I can have it, you better believe I have it.

(Con't on page 3)

TO RUSSIA, WITH ABSTINENCE

I was told by my pressure group in Debtor's Anonymous (another 12 step program) that I needed a vacation, and it was decided that I would travel to Russia. I had been weighing and measuring off the grey sheet without exception, committing my food to my sponser, and not eating in between meals no matter what, for 792 days before I left for Russia. During this time, I traveled domestically on business trips, many, many times. I knew, with proper planning and preparing, traveling could be done without a hicch.

Three women on grey sheet had gone to Russia before me, (one from Cambridge, one from Connecticut, and one from my home group in New York City) and were willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with me. They all said it would be extremely difficult. I fantasized about taking three complete meals for each of the 10 days I would be away.

I began buying canned foods to bring that I knew I could take into the country, including tiny shrimp, mushroom, and pineapple. I also took some of my favorite foods to have: five pounds of roasted soybeans, soybean flakes, sesame oil, creamy salad dressing, and the largest Rome apples I could find (3/4 of a pound to one pound each).

My New York City friend suggested I take fresh fruit with me, although it was illegal. Her luggage had not been checked as she was traveling with a tour group,

(Con't on page 4)

I'm writing in celebration of my 38th birthday today, and for the fun of it too!

For one year and 9 months I've been abstinent on the grey sheet. I've been abstinent from my first day in this program, which is April 9, 1987. I am truly grateful and delighted for my success due to this program of recovery from compulsive overeating and abstinence from the addiction to refined sugar and refined carbohydrates.

I'd like to say that it has been easy, but it has not - not at all. The feelings that have surfaced in this time of abstinence have been traumatic, intense, frightening and at times seemed unbearable. Lonliness and feelings of isolation and abandonment engulfed me; however, I did not eat. I felt the feelings and did not eat. In order to do this, I had to surrender to pain and the willingness of not knowing where these feelings would lead me. Sometimes I got support and sometimes I didn't, but I never abandoned myself and ate, and this is a miracle which I am proud and humbled. I weathered the storms and found that the best friend I have is myself. When I surrender and ask "only for knowledge of your will for me and the power to carry that out" I get the answer I seek - to thy own self be true and abstinence. To the friends in OA, AA and AL-Anon who have listened and understood me, I am comforted and blessed.

I believe that the bleak days are gone and the sunshine is here - ONE DAY AT A TIME. I have been with my husband for 9 years, and it is only very recently that I've come to understand intimacy and my fear of involvement and fear of abandonment which vulnerability creates in me. Food was a substitute for sex and love, and the risk of sexual involvement combined with emotional intimacy has been the most healing completion in autonomy and separation from my mother and from abuse. Besides, sex is a hell of a lot more fun and less fattening than eating.

As an addict and as an abuser, I know that if I don't take care of myself, my tendency is to retreat to the illusion of the safety of the familiar. By that I mean the illusion that food will comfort me, which it does not, or the illusion that withholding love, compulsive interference, control, belittling, holier than thou attitudes, contempt, and the false illusion that these behaviors are powerful do and will overwhelm me. Shame that I once felt about being an addict to food no longer exist because I am in the solution. Shame over abusive treatment of my husband is real and good for me - for only in owning my shame do I have a way out. I have found that when I am mean and contemptuous towards him, when I don't listen or make eye contact or denigrate his opinions I know that I am really afraid of allowing another individual their rights and their power, for in reality I feel powerless and small.

I am learning that I can share, that there is enough room for both of us to be right and for both of us to express our opinions and feelings and that this does not negate my being. Coming from a home of compulsive overeaters and abusers I never learned how to share and I am lucky to have a second chance at life - through abstinence one day at a time and through intimacy one day at a time. The truth for me is this: Without abstinence I have no options - so, abstinence is the most important thing in my life today without exception. I weigh and measure three meals a day from the grey sheet and call it in to my sponsor. Recovery and the success that recovery brings are possible one day at a time - and that's all that anyone has no matter who they are - period.

- Sara T.
Ausin, Texas

PEN PALS

Want to be a Pen Pal? Just let me know!

FINDING MY WAY - WEIGH

I'm not much of a writer
That is what I say--
But then again
I wasn't much of an eater
Until I met Grey Sheet

I walked in through the doors
pale and weak
I was told to buy a cup and a scale
What did I think?
NUTS!...is what I thought
These people just don't know what I need

But
Off I went not knowing why--
To the store and what did I buy?

A CUP, A SCALE AND MEASURING SPOONS...

The first two weeks were easy
on the grey sheet cloud...
But the cotton stayed in my ears -- OUT I went

Eight months had to pass
before I was ready to give up
Enough! Enough! I had said and the flag went up

I surrendered to the simple truth
Out came the cup and the scale
I found warmth and kindness inside the grey sheet...

Now a couple years later

My job and name have changed
But my cup and scale remain
With my Higher Power's grace
They go where ever I go
And where have I gone?
Come to the grey sheet rooms
and you will see...

Beth
Forest Hills, NY

GREETINGS FROM LONDON

I want to write a small piece just to say hello to everyone who is weighing and measuring without exception. I too weigh and measure my food without exception from the Grey Sheet, and am part of the growing Grey Sheet community in London. Although we are a small group and still very young, I feel we are growing in strength and also that we are being looked after not just by a Higher Power, but also by all of you who are also weighing and measuring without exception.

(Con't on page3)

SHEET OF GREY

It's not just what you give me
but what you took away
That makes me trust completely
in your sheet of grey.

You give me peace and freedom
from that losing fight
which took me to the
"frigerator"
every single night.

You give me friends and
fellowship
when everything seemed dark
and lit the flames of sanity
when I could not find a
spark.

To list the many benefits
would take more than a day
But just as wonderous in my
life is what you took away.
The weight went first and
rather fast
that seemed the biggest
trial

Then in the realm of my
disease you took away denial
You took away confusion,
depression and self hate

It simply melted off of me
along with all that weight
You took away my need to push
and shove

at life the quiet
desparation
turmoil grief and strife

You took away my fears of life
and
death and sin the psycosis
that said

to me that I must always win
You've whittled down self
centerdness

although the jobs not done
at least by now I realize
I'm not the only one

You took away the lonliness
my empty hollow ways
and all the dark foreboding
clouds

that filled my every day
You've stolen even more than
this just like a mater thief

I never even saw you take
the sorrow and the grief
I slowly woke and looked

around and then I realized
You took from me and my
disease all that I despised

Because of this I've made a
choice

at least for one more day
I'll weigh and measure all my
food from your sheet of grey
Its not because I suffer from
any kind of lack

But more because those things
you took I never want them
back

- Duffy Loderup Sweder

(Con't from page 1)

As a duly self-annointed
greysheet person, I call my
sponsor at 6:55 A.M. most
every morning and commit my
three treasures of the day. I
then discuss with her any
necessary maneuvers to ensure
I get my food around strange
dinners in questionable places
with friends, families or
unknown entities.

I attend meetings at least
every other day and I ask my
Higher Power for help in the
morning and thank her at
night. A greysheet person
worth her weight in her
favorite greysheet meal, does
not eat no matter what I
Abstinece is her "main
squeeze" and she weighs and
measures her food without
exception from the greysheet
one day at a time ever mindful
that she's in this for the
long-haul.

I must mention the ultimate
CO's blissful delight. This
delight is in the form of
abstinent dining at Grace's.
If you visit New York, after
attending the Jan Hus Friday
night meeting you must dine at
Grace's (not the actual name,
it's Sung Chu Mei). The
address is 1367 First Ave.
(between 73rd and 74th,
telephone number is 535-7530).
They know us there
(greysheeters) and will almost
quote you cornstarch, flour or
sugar and fried tofu.

May the force of abstinence be
with you.

- Diane R.
New York, NY

(Con't)

Thank you all who have come to
share at our 10:00 a.m. morn-
ing Grey Sheet meeting and
also everyone on tape. Hear-
ing and seeing that it works
and keeps on working gives me
trust and faith in the Grey
Sheet and the growing belief
that I am not suddenly going
to turn grey and drop dead,
but that as long as I am
weighing and measuring without
exception I too will be looked
after and given the chance to
accept for today the beautiful
gift of abstinence from the
illness of compulsive
overeating, and the chance to
learn to live today "a far
happier and more useful
abstinent life. I hope to meet
more of you in the future and
in the meantime, wish all of
you a happy, joyous, and
abstinent New Year. - Sue B
London, England

W & M CAMBRIDGE!

My name is Kelly H. and I'm a
recovering food addict. I
weigh and measure three meals
a day without exception from
the Grey Sheet, commit it to
my sponsor, and turn my life
over to God. Thank you God
that I have this solid
foundation. With close to four
years of back to back Grey
Sheet abstinence, my God
decided that I was ready to
have major changes. I got a
new job in August (which I no
way would be at if I were
eating, it's a great job!),
bought a car in November, (I
never could save for a car, I
spent all my money on food,
not necessarily binges, just
always eating and buying food.
It didn't count as eating cuz
it wasn't a meal!), and the
week after I got the car I
moved out of Cambridge. For
three weeks I felt like my
body and head weren't
connected. ALL I KNEW was to
weigh and measure my food, and
pray. God answered my
prayers. I got lots of
encouragement and lots of Grey
Sheet mail from London,
Sweden, Connecticut, Texas,
Florida, etc.

I am so grateful I'm not on a
diet! That was sure a lonely
road. But I have so much
more; my physical health, my
self esteem, a fairly decent
prayer life. I can't be
abstinet without the steps.
I am grateful to AWOL (A Way
of Life) for showing me the
tools of recovery.

Also recently, I have been
given the gift of someone
special in my life who
supports my program. The
other day in response to his
mom asking me why I couldn't
take my apple to the movies
(after dinner), he came over
and put his hands on my
shoulders and said, "that's
another one of the rules. She
has to eat her whole meal in
one sitting!"

God knows exactly what I need!

Keep up the great work with
the newsletter.

"If you don't want to do
something, offer it up as a
prayer for someone else. Try
it, it really works!"

- Special K.
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Adina,

CS NEWLEYWED

I'm so happy to have received "Shades of Grey" via members of Austin, Texas Grey Sheet groups. I know one other G.S.'r in Miami. My sponsor is from Austin. We have been speaking every week for 3 1/2 years. I commit my food daily to local people.

In 1976 I joined OA in Manhattan. There were 2 food plans - Grey Sheet and Orange Sheet. I took the "easier, softer way" which was Orange Sheet. Five months later I was thin for the first time in my life and shortly thereafter began my first relapse. What followed were years of alternating relapses and abstinence. Sometimes I had as much as one year or more abstinence. Once I survived a relapse in which my weight flew from 110 lbs. to 183 lbs. in 6 months. I'm 5'2" and I looked like an army tank and was unable to get out of bed by any means other than rolling onto the floor and propping myself up with furniture. I was 30 years old and felt as if I had no future.

The lengthy abstinence times were on Grey Sheet.

In 1984 I was introduced by phone to a visitor from Austin. She told me there were groups of G.S.'r's in Texas and Cambridge. I was thrilled! I started corresponding with one. I was no longer alone! And I pestered my correspondent with "How can I get a sponsor from your group?" Until in May 1985, at which time I was maintaining (precariously) at my goal weight, she began being my sponsor.

Last month I turned 40. I took my first trip to Austin and attended Grey Sheet meetings. At last I could freely admit (without coming under attack) that I weigh and measure 3 meals per day (without exception) from Grey Sheet.

Because of the freedom Grey Sheet gives me, I can travel, attend banquets, business luncheons, and lead a normal life. I prefer to bring my own meals (without exception) because my food, prepared by me, is made with love.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Hornstein
S. Miami, Florida

Hi!

Wow so many miracles! Before Greysheet, I existed. My friends had showers, married, had babies, and their lives were changing. I realize now that I was in the food.

In the past two days I heard from a girlfriend who had a baby boy. My other good friend found out she is pregnant. By the time you read this letter I will be married.

As recently as a year ago I thought I would never marry. I realize now I didn't want anyone to see me in the refrigerator at night. I didn't want anyone to know my secrets.

My Higher Power brought me my fiance very early in abstinence. I pushed him away several times. Our first date was a tennis game. He is a tennis pro and I know prior to greysheet no way would I have put on shorts. With no confidence in myself or my tennis game, the serenity prayer and I went to play tennis.

Our group is very small and I know it is difficult for newcomers to comprehend that I am a compulsive overeater. I was never obese and I sometimes feel that I have to convince them. I know this is my denial.

Everyday I know with more conviction that I have been chosen. I have been given the biggest and best gift of a lifetime. I can finally say I am glad to be a compulsive overeater.

I miss all of you.

Love,
Molly
- St. Croix, Virgin Islands

(Con't from page 1)

and so was I. We decided the worst scenario would be that they would check my luggage, find the fruit, and throw away. I promptly asked my psychiatrist for a letter stating I was under his care, and was on a special food plan, just in case I had a hassle at the Russian border. But, my luggage went through customs without being opened.

I also packed three meals in Zip Loc bags to eat on the day of flight, at the airport, and on the eight hour flight to Moscow. Once I finished with the bags, I was left with nothing to wash except my hands, teeth, and face.

Believe me, I ended up eating everything from my supply. The Russian fresh fruit and vegetables there were dinky and not worth trying. I did buy one huge sack of tomatoes in an outdoor Moscow market. Although I paid for three meals a day in each hotel, I had to scrounge for what I needed. I pressed the tour guide to order me meat and/or fish without sauce, but it often came breaded or stuffed with carbohydrates anyway. I was able to get some protein, hard boiled eggs, filet mignon (cooked to death), caviar, smoked sturgeon, cheese, but it was never enough!

The Russians do not have the channels of distribution we have in the United States or the modern refrigeration techniques. I got really sick of tomatoes, which I used as salad for lunch and dinner, and didn't like the taste of their cucumbers which were in ample supply. They were beyond toleration for me, and after 31 years of smoking, I have a limited sense of taste. Can you imagine what they would taste like to a young adult with a developed sense of taste?

- Deanna
NY

Thank you all for our third publication! It is good to know we are alive and strong around the world.

Our fourth edition is scheduled for June 1. Please send your experience, strength and hope to:

"...for together we can do something, I cannot do alone..."