
Shades of Grey

\$1.00

Winter 1996

THE STEP UP

Step Ten

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

In Step Ten we continue our active involvement in working the steps *on a daily basis*. Step Ten is a prescription for living abstinely. It reminds us that only when self-searching becomes a regular habit can we expect to maintain our abstinence.

While I may have thought that doing a thorough Step Four was enough, Step Ten calls for a *continued* honest inventory of both my positive works as well as my negative actions--with this step I actively seek to correct that which needs correcting and credit myself where credit applies.

This step challenges me to keep a clean slate and thus, an emotional balance, that I would not have were I to let my character defects run amuck. Every day seems to bring up yet another issue I need to look at. And every day brings yet another opportunity to clean up the wreckage of my past by not continuing it in the future.

Today I see that when I let my ego play games with others I often fall into the pit of hurt pride, closely followed by a build-up of nasty resentments. I can not afford to indulge in this kind of behavior if I don't want to compromise my abstinence. On a *daily basis* I need to move out of blaming others, and instead, seek to find my part in what is going on *and admit it promptly* without any further ado. In doing this, I find peace can be mine as I let go of my resentments, regardless of who owns the blame, and then actively seek to forgive and forget.

Much thanks to everyone in the community for all of the support that I have been given. I know I do not walk this journey alone and that enables me to strive to do my very best given the challenge of Step Ten--for together we *can do* what we can not do alone! ❖

Melissa S., New York City, N.Y.

EDITOR'S CORNER

A quick note to all you Greysheeters out there who have been waiting patiently for this issue of *Shades of Grey* to arrive. We apologize for the delay. In abstinence our lives get full and exciting with work, relationships, family, etc., and thus, we fell behind in the production of this issue. We are now getting back on track and you can all expect the prompt arrival of the future issues. Enjoy. ❖

Alison K., New York City, N.Y.

UNDER 90 DAYS

Read This Before You Relapse

I have 28 days back and I am so grateful. It is hell out there. After four and a half years, I thought I was more powerful than the addiction. I became macrobiotic. It lasted for one month. I was so unhappy! I was totally overwhelmed and then when I felt lonely, I found myself bingeing and vomiting. One night was enough - it was by the grace of God that people reached out to help me. Also my disease was so strong that I didn't realize how lucky I was to be back. Now I know that the first bite leads me into a binge. Also I know that I have a chemical addiction to sugar and starches. And finally, I have a clear confirmation that I have a mental obsession with food. My disease made me a mess and I am never cured. Thank God for Greysheet. ❖

Paolina, New York City, N.Y.

OUR VOICES

Getting Connected in London

My name is Anne. I live in France near Paris and I've been abstinent on the Greysheet for four years. There's one Greysheet meeting per week. I'm mostly alone. So what a joy when I was invited for a Round-up in London! That Saturday, April 20th, we were about ten persons for the Greysheet meeting. Fantastic! Even if I did not understand everyone (it

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was in English, of course) I felt the strength and hope given by sharing one's own experience. In the afternoon it was a pleasure to share with everyone individually. All those shares renewed me. When leaving London that night I heard my H.P.'s voice. He told me to go and said it exists: there is a solution for this disease. The Greysheet is not an outside issue but a way of recovery a day at a time. ✕

With Greysheet abstinence,

Anne, France

A Thank You To My Loving Support

(Read by a Greysheet abstinent person to her support person at New York Round-Up Family/Friends Support Workshop, October 19, 1996)

You are my wonderful non-OA support person -- the love of my life. I know our life together may be a lot less complicated than many who are with us today, and I never want to forget how blessed we are and that this is a gift that has been given to us by our Higher Powers.

It is not easy living with this disease -- not for me and not for you, but hopefully we stretch for growth and a better life shared together a day at a time, a moment at a time, a disappointment at a time, or a crisis at a time. Let me never forget what your support has meant to me these past three years on Greysheet and the five years without it, for they each have had their issues. In gratitude for your support and love, I would like to publicly thank you on this sweetest day.

Thank You For:

1. Your patience when I expect you to read my mind.
2. Never complaining about my going to meetings.
3. Embracing my Greysheet friends as your own.
4. Your sensing that my energy needs to be spent fighting this disease instead of fighting you.
5. For all the salad chopping.
6. For running to the store when I'm minus a green pepper.
7. For driving 35 miles one Wednesday night when I had locked my keys in the car at my meeting.
8. For telling me that you would love me no matter what my weight was -- and more important, knowing in my heart that it's true because of the way you treat and respect me all the rest of the time.

9. For putting me first when I have to, need to, and want to put my abstinence and program first instead of you.
10. For verbally and publicly expressing to me how the changes you saw in me made you want what I had.
11. For taking action to make some of those changes in your life so that we are both headed down the same path.
12. For carting my food and utensils around in your vehicle.
13. For sharing what you can of your meal in a restaurant when I don't have quite enough.
14. For understanding or at least accepting when I feel irritable...knowing that this too shall pass...you hope!
15. For accepting that I need time to do service.
16. For accepting that I am not nearly as accepting of things as you are.
17. For believing, as I do, that this program works...one day at a time... progress not perfection.

It is in giving to and supporting each other that we get back what we give and can reap the benefits ten-fold. Always remember that as long as you continue to support me and my program, you can play golf!!!!

(Our sense of humor is a big part of our support for each other. When nothing else seems to work...try acting silly. It works for me!)

And to all of you who are here at this support meeting looking for and giving your experience, strength and hope, I thank you for being part of this Greysheet community -- doers and supporters. We all need each other. ✕

Doreen C. P., Chicago, IL.

Toward a Full Life

I had years of experience at being passionate about my food and the short term pleasure it could bring me. I would do anything to get and devour large quantities of food. My life was dedicated to getting more. There was never enough pleasure because, like the food, it only lasted for a moment and then I wanted more. Bacchus was the only god I served and each drink I took from his cup only made me want more. I was never sated.

When I got abstinent, I somewhere connected my passion with my disease and tried to cut it out of my

life as I had compulsive overeating. What I have found is that a life without passion is not a full life, not a happy life. I need to find a way to retain my passion for life and direct it towards healthy outlets. I need not to fear the strength of my passions and suppress them, but find ways to direct them positively.

Today I am searching for a way to feel fully alive again and to be abstinent. I know for me there is no life without Greysheet abstinence, but my life is not worth living without the passions. I need to find a path through this as I have so many other things in my abstinence. ☒

Gary G., Jersey City, N.J.

Cleaning House, Trusting God

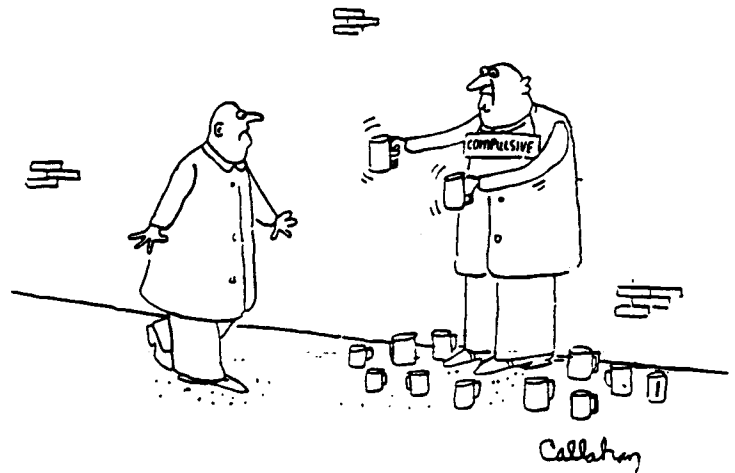
Hello. My name is Janice. I weigh and measure three meals a day off the Greysheet. I commit it to a sponsor, I do not and have not, for the past almost 11 months, eaten in between and abstinence is the most important thing in my life. When saying abstinence is the most important thing in my life I have to ask myself just what does that mean? Peace of mind, freedom, especially freedom from the pain (spiritual) that had me overeat and binge and purge. If ever there was a day when I'm glad to not be dealing with the food except to prepare, weigh and measure and eat it, it is today. Although not new to this community, OA or even HOW, in twenty years this is the first period of time when I have consistently and without fail adhered to a plan of eating on a daily basis.

On today's episode of Oprah Winfrey the entire show was devoted to weight loss (hers primarily). Although most of the show bored and irritated me, the one thing she discussed which got my attention and interest was Oprah's personal revelation that her overeating was directly related to a lack of joy in her life. I related to this because I have consumed intoxicating amounts of alcohol and huge quantities of food because of a deep sadness and lack of joy. And just as I once was (mistakenly) sure I couldn't live without these compulsion and addictions, I now know (absolutely) I must have, and am able to, experience joy. I now eat and drink of the Spirit, from God as I do not understand but have an experience of (daily) in a deep and profound way. Without this daily psychic charge and reprieve I am convince I would've killed myself long ago. Because as the Big Book clearly states "Leaving aside the drink problem, they [me] tell why life was

so unsatisfactory." And believe me, mine was. No wonder I had to eat, drink, spend, run all of it! Today I can say with utter abandonment and conviction these Steps when, not lived (as they say) or thought about, but taken, i.e., taken in the form of daily written inventory (to continue to face fear and resentment), sharing with a close-mouthed, trustworthy person, direct amends when and if needed and, absolutely without failure, meditation, is what sustains me and provides me with the joy I've so desperately lacked my whole life.

As I write this letter I am on my back, healing from a back injury that I, through my own lack of wisdom, intelligence and extreme self-will created. I can no longer accept this is something that was done to me or that I am a victim of. I also know only the loving God of Alcoholics Anonymous is going to heal me. As the Big Book says, "When we straighten ourselves spiritually the mental and physical will follow." So while as a child when I was told "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" I am doing just that i.e., putting all my spiritual, emotional and physical eggs in God's 12 Step Basket. After all, it says no human power could relieve us of our alcoholism. Excessive eating, sex, exercise - all of it is for me just more about alcoholism, and thank God I am not relying on an individual or location or job or anything to heal me. And I would encourage and support all of you, if you haven't and aren't currently, to continue to Trust in God and Clean House. God can (and is) if sought. Thank you to all my fellow Greysheeters. ☒

Your Greysheet Sister Janice, Santa Monica, CA.



BULLETIN BOARD

GREYSHEET MATH

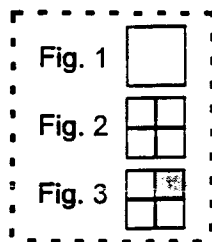
The Greysheet Box:

I use this method to help me figure out the proportions of the "10" meals I love to enjoy. It works great for 4oz. of protein - for those of you who get more, I have no sympathy and you're on your own!

1. Draw a box (see fig.1)
2. Divide into 4 parts - for 4oz. of protein (see fig.2)
3. Fill in the squares as you choose you food (see fig.3)

Example: Fill in two squares for one ounce of cheese or one egg, ½ square for one ounce of yogurt, one square is one ounce of protein. (Note: When all the squares are full, that's all you get - but don't worry, there's always another meal coming.) Enjoy!

Angela E., Los Angeles, CA.

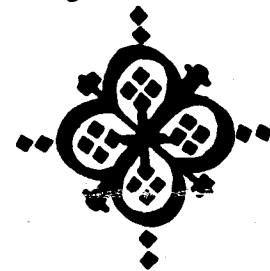


Anniversary Box

*Penny F.S.
New Jersey
January 10th, 11 Years*

*Paula A.
Clifton, N. J.
February 21st, 7 Years*

*Jennifer P.
Wilton, CT
February 26th, 12 Years*



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