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## The Village Voice

by Joan Brown

As you can see, “Paint Therapy” has certainly inspired the clients. These canvases — “Works of Recovery” — are proudly displayed in the group rooms so that our clients can leave a little bit of their own experience, strength and hope for the new people coming into treatment. We are currently working on some other creative ideas for the village — possibly a flower and vegetable garden in front of 4A. A little nostalgic reminder to all you alumni who had a designated plant (inner child) to care for and carry throughout treatment. As always, we try to keep it fun and interesting while clients are working hard on changing their lives toward recovery.

As a reminder to Alumni — we have an open chair for you at our two fireside meetings each week — Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 6:00 p.m. See you in recovery!



**Grant me that graceful moment in which pain  
 becomes learning and tragedy — survivorship**

*In memory of Theodora “Teddi” Mosley, Robin Piper’s mother*



TURNING POINT

## Getting Back to Basics Kept Me in Recovery and Saved My Sanity

by Marge Porter

As much as I hate to admit it, I had become complacent. It wouldn't have necessarily looked that way from your point of view, but remember — you can't tell a book by its cover. Let me tell you what was going on "inside me."

1. I was comfortable in my sobriety and confident in my recovery life and in my relationships with other people in recovery.
2. I was comfortable in my job, confident that I had job security and would be an employee of Turning Point of Tampa until I made a decision to retire or go elsewhere.
3. I was comfortable in my relationship with my husband and confident that we would continue our lifestyle in which I work and he takes care of just about everything at home.
4. I was comfortable (and excited) in making plans for family vacations over the summer of 2003, where we would have valuable time with our five kids and eleven grandkids. I was so confident that my plans would work the way I wanted them that I made travel arrangements nearly nine months ahead of time.
5. I was comfortable in my body, confident that my physical health had never been better.
6. I was comfortable in my emotional life, confident that I could deal with any feelings that might come my way.
7. I was comfortable in my spirituality and confident that as long as I kept doing the next right thing, my Higher Power and I would agree on what is best for me.

Did you by any chance notice all the "I's" in that list? Those of you who know me, know that I seldom let a day go by without reminding clients of the importance of the first word in the 1st Step — **"We."** I had gotten away from the "We," possibly one of the most important and valuable concepts of recovery.

So, as painful as it was, my recent bout with cancer was a real wake-up call about the priorities in my life, as well as a powerful reminder of what a wonderful gift it is when we allow others to help us get through the tough times in life and build a strong recovery foundation. It did not take long in the progression of my cancer that it became very clear that the condition of those seven areas of my life in which I felt so comfortable and confident were in need of some strengthening. In other words, I was reminded pretty quickly in this situation that it's easy to work a program and "look good" when there are no major challenges to meet.

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# Our Staff

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*Renee Haney, M.D.*

## Nurse

*Ellen Seto, R.N.*

## Program Director

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### Human Resources/

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## Receptionist

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## Client Coordinator

*Joan Browne*

## And Our Village Staff

*Accredited by J.C.A.H.O.*



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# Letting Go and Letting God

by Hans Lutz

Recently, the recovering community lost one of our own to the disease of addiction. Many felt the pain of sadness, anger, and confusion. Some were reminded of other loved ones who had been lost. Others were left to question their own fallibilities or to wonder who was next? Sadly, a few used the loss to drive themselves back into the pain of their own addictions. The Big Book says "Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's World by mistake."

Personally, I have wasted much time and energy in the past trying to figure out the "why" of things. Today, I do not have to understand why some things happen, I just try to accept situations as they are and trust that everything does have a purpose. Today, I am okay with not knowing the "why". This is one of the many gifts of 12-Step recovery. Earlier this year, I lost my mother. I deal with this void in my life as a reminder to value the friends and family I have who are living. To enjoy the precious, little time we have together, and to not sweat the small stuff. Her passing has reminded me to value what is really important in life and has helped me strengthen my relationship with my Higher Power and not take myself so seriously. In her death, I was led to reach out stronger to my recovery program. This is the legacy I want to leave behind when my turn comes.

All of us have lost someone, or many, who are so dear to our hearts. I leave you with the following poem I recently read a young woman's Memorial Service in hopes that it may give you hope, freedom, and encouragement.

## "I'm Free"

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,  
I'm following the path God has laid, you see.  
I took His hand when I heard Him call,  
I turned my back and left it all.



I could not stay another day,  
To laugh, to love, to work, to play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way,  
I found peace at the close of the day.

If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with "remembered" joys.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Oh yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My life's been full, I've savored much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.  
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Life your hearts and peace to thee,  
God wanted me now; He set me Free!



# Getting Back to Basics Kept Me in Recovery and Saved My Sanity

*Continued from Page 1*

Bottom line — the message I kept hearing in one form or another was clear — **get back to basics!**

How? By being **honest, open, and willing.** Reach out to others, tell them what's going on and let them help you.

**Trust the process. Keep it simple.** When I became *unable* to work, rather than taking my job for granted, I became very aware very quickly how fortunate I am to have the love and ongoing support of my co-workers, not to mention how grateful I am to have a job I really like to do and look forward to each day.

**Develop an attitude of gratitude.** Some of you know me as “Marge in Charge.” You can imagine my dismay when I found myself having to be totally dependent on my husband as my caregiver. He listened to my anger and fears. He managed my medications. He was always there and never complained in spite of some very unpleasant circumstances.

**Easy does it.** Along those same lines, I got pretty whiny when I was unable to vacation with family. Everyone was disappointed, but their priority was that I get better. Some of them were able to come spend time here in Florida. All of them were able to keep in touch and be supportive on the phone, internet, via pictures and video tapes. (*I do have plans to visit with them in Ohio before returning to work.*)

**One day at a time, acceptance is the key.** Some of you know that initially I was very angry and blaming others for not finding my cancer earlier. Today I can honestly say that I am grateful that we found it when we did. All the “why’s really don’t matter. Just like with addiction, the main response needs to be, “Where do we go from here? What do we need to do to be in recovery?” And then do it, whatever it takes! Right now it looks as though the treatment worked! I am grateful. God put a lot of people back in my life, along with many new people who had only my best interest and recovery as their priority. They all were there to remind me to **get back to basics and to trust the process.** (I don’t know about you, but I have a hard time trusting when I hurt. All these people — 12-Step folks, friends, relatives, co-workers, health care providers — were there day after day to share my pain, my fears, and eventually **HOPE.**

**This too shall pass.** Feelings. Oh my, it’s really easy for me to help others experience, process and work through uncomfortable feelings. It’s different when those feelings are mine. One that really surprised me was the tremendous amount of fear that I felt. I have heard that FEAR stands for “false evidence appearing real.” I have also heard that fear is the opposite of faith. I found that to be true for me on many days during this ordeal. I was angry, afraid, hopeless and often in self-pity as I would focus on all the negatives around me. Once again, getting back to basics meant allowing people to reach out to me and to share my thoughts and feelings. This worked just like they say — the more I gave away to others, the less power those negative feelings had and the less space they took in my head. This left room for more positive thoughts and opened the door for the possibility of seeing that once again my Higher Power put all the right people in my life right when I needed them.

**Let go and let God.** It’s easy to be spiritual and faithful when things are going smoothly. I was very angry and wanted to blame God. How could God let this happen to me? What did I ever do to deserve this? As people were there to love me and support me, they helped me to remember that God doesn’t “make” or “allow” these things to happen. But they do happen. When they do, God gives us choices and puts people in our paths to help us make the right choice. One of the biggest and most positive choices is to take some action (as the Big Book tells us), get back to basics and take advantage of the support of others.

One of the unexpected benefits of reaching out to others — many of those who were there for me told me that in sharing my pain, I actually helped them! Can you imagine? **Keep it simple. It works if you work it.**

Hey! You don’t have to wait for a big wake-up call before you get back to basics. Check your program and your priorities. Perhaps it’s a good time to go back and re-read your life story or to review your 1st step with your sponsor in order to renew your commitment to your program, your recovery, and your life. It’s a wonderful gift you can choose to give to yourself. Oh, and by the way, the people who love you will benefit from your decision as well.