

From Gray Pants to Rainbows

My recovery is really *real* to me now. I have bought smaller clothes as if I waited much longer I was going to be mooning everyone (and I don't see that as recovery for anyone)!!

Shopping for new clothes has been a new experience. While I am by no means tiny, I did have clothing choices. It hit me ... "wow!" This is a preview of what is to come! Wouldn't you think I'd be doing the happy dance in the store as I reached for smaller sizes to try on? Of course not... I am an addict and I don't make anything that simple. Lesson learned: I need to take a recovery friend with me when I buy new clothes.

The first time I went shopping I wound up buying clothes that were way to big and that would make sure no one would notice that I had lost weight. Such an experience used to send me straight into a full binge. This time I am actually talking about it and getting it out instead of eating and stuffing that back in.

Why would I be scared to lose weight? Well, isn't it obvious??? I want to remain invisible. I know to the outside world that sounds totally insane but I think if we were playing that infamous game of "Have you ever?" many people would be swapping seats right now. If we were looking at this with a scientific approach it would make absolutely no sense for me to have gained to 350+ pounds to become invisible. I hope that none of you decide to experience that but believe me it works. At that weight you don't have to deal with sexual attraction (wipes my brow:: whewwwww!!) Good thing... because last time I dealt with that I got more unhealthy and crazier than ever and my heart broke. I starved myself on some medically approved and supervised "liquid crap" for 6 months – talk about insane! I lost 80 something pounds and immediately fell in love and head over heels. With that 80 pound weight loss I thought I was pretty hot and in control of EVERYTHING. I needed no one so I was safe... right? WRONG! The only thing I was in control of was effortlessly digging deeper toward bottom. I had no idea of that and if someone had told me that I would have marked them off as someone who was in some sort of cult or something.

Hey, where did my topic go? Anyway back to the topic... trying on clothes is still not a pleasant thing even with some of my weight gone... maybe when I get to "goal weight" I will jump for joy anytime shopping for clothes is mentioned but I'm not jumping now.

OK... so it makes sense right? The old clothes are too big and the new clothes fit... throw out the old ones. But, but those clothes have been a part of my life and I love them and... and ...and ...and some poor child in another country may need a few dozen outfits from my pants. Oh wait, that is about cleaning my plate, not my pants.

I commit to my sponsor it is time to throw out the gray pants. Ugggggh gray... now who makes gray pants for a girl 350+ pounds? I start pulling out pants to throw away and oh my God! I start counting and I have more than 15 pairs. Well, they get threadbare faster when your thighs are rubbing together... a girl never knows when she will need a new pair of gray pants and every color of shirt that will go with gray.

Wait a minute... what big animal is colored gray???? Do you think the fashion people were implying something? Haarrmmphhh! Ok I am going to keep three pairs of the nasty blah color that was not only the color of my pants when I wasn't abstinent but was the color of my life.

Have you ever thought about gray? It isn't really even a color... it's not black or white or really anything. I remember buying some of them... that was the only color left in my size and I was desperate for something to cover my very full moon. You might be thinking why are you keeping 3 pairs... well, one as a reminder I don't ever want to go back to "my gray pants life", one to burn as a personal ritual and as a visual to letting my old gray life go up in smoke to God where He can take care of it and one to take to the Fall retreat on Monteagle Mountain where I shall torch them in the bonfire. Many people take journal entries and burn them, letting all their "stuff" go up in smoke. All my stuff is related to those dang gray pants. I never felt feelings... no blue sadness, no red anger, no happy blue skies, no purple serenity, no green refreshing spring... just blah old gray symbolizing stuffing down every good and bad feeling I had and getting bigger and bigger to the point where I was wearing gray as much on the outside as I was on the inside.

I want rainbows back in my life. Yes, I know there will be some blues of sadness and grief but I also get to experience the blue of serenity as well as all the happy colors of living. I want to be able to love myself and others. I want to experience life--all of it – all the shades and hues of color. I know this is possible by working the OA program. I see it as I look at people in the room with long term abstinence. I see it in the color of my sponsor's eyes when I am gently guided to the right path. I see it in the smile of a newcomer finding hope for the first time. I am beginning to see it in the mirror as I am learning to work *the* program... not *my* program. I feel it when I work on my steps, make outreach calls, tell my story, kneel for prayer, say the third step prayer, write down my

food, give up a trigger food I thought I couldn't live without, survive a feeling I thought I would die if I felt and all the things that help me focus on the program.

Last but not least... I see it when I look in my closet and there is not one pair of GRAY PANTS!! Thank you God!!--
-Angie



The Roving Reporter Asks...

Have you experienced emotional discomfort as a result of physical recovery/change in body size? If so, how did you work through this? (or, How are you working through this?)

My experience with physical recovery is an ongoing struggle emotionally. I just cannot seem to really see myself as I am. Right now, I am going through a phase where I see myself as very fat and overweight.

Yet, in all truth, I am not any different from a month ago. What I truly have found, and just heard this again in a meeting last week, is to focus on my step work and the program, and if my focus is there rather than on how I look, the outcome will be very natural and comfortable. But this is not a one time fix...it is an ongoing set of actions. The discomfort from weight gain and weight loss are reminders to lean on my steps and program. That is where the answer is for me. Melissa H.

The Roving Reporter "roves" via e-mail. If you would like to receive the question of the month and have opportunity to respond, e-mail b.brown8@comcast.net.

Our OA Intergroup is in need of NEW BOARD MEMBERS . Nominations are now open. Please see the information below and consider these service positions for our Intergroup.

IG Board Members Basic Descriptions:

Qualifications for ALL board members: Active member of IG working the steps for minimum of one year, 6 months current abstinence, familiar with 12 Traditions.

IG Chair: Basic Duties: One-year term, presides at all IG meetings, compiles IG meeting agenda, votes in the event of a tie, serves as ex-officio IG officer for one year after official term.

IG Vice-Chair: Basic Duties: One-year term, assists chair, updates contacts for current IG members and distributes at IG meetings, serves in the absence of the Chair.

IG Secretary: Basic Duties: One-year term, keeps minutes for the IG meetings and supplies copies to members, takes roll, maintains file of past minutes, directs correspondence (mail, etc.) to the appropriate officer, mails announcements and other communications as needed.

IG Treasurer: Basic Duties: One-year term, maintains checking and savings accounts, pays IG bills, keeps financial records, provides monthly report at IG to members.

Contact Gina (gina@curtisit.com) or **Peggy** (napierp@comcast.net)

The OA Summer Workshop on the 5th Step was well attended and a great time was had by all. Twenty-six people were in attendance on Sunday, June 3 for the workshop. Thanks to the workshop committee and all who were a part of it! –Brian

The Twelfth Step Within Committee is sponsoring the workshop, "Tragedy on the River Denial," July 29 from 2:00- 4:30 at the Intergroup Office.

Notes of Hope is a bi-monthly newsletter for the Middle Tennessee Intergroup. Contact Pam B. at b.brown8@comcast.net to submit an article or announcement. Deadline for the September/October issue is August 15, 2007.
