

## **More On Eating Disorders** Version 1.2

In our individual pursuit of happiness and success, even pursuit of usefulness and selfless service, we who have an eating disorder have struggled with the business of living.

Our problems, though many and varied, have elements in common. We have mismanaged anger, avoided growing pains that might have set us free, indulged in unhealthy forms of dependence on those around us, and engaged in futile, damaging attempts to control our bodies and other people.

We suffered many forms of illness – physical, emotional, and spiritual – as a consequence of our attempts to control our problems and ourselves through ever-greater exertion of self-will. Most of us lost our self-respect, our hopes and dreams, and anything like meaningful purpose for our lives. Many lost their general health or compromised their health. Many have died.

We tried in vain to control our emotional natures with some or all of the following behaviors: bingeing, purging, laxative abuse, over-exercising, self-denial, restricting, self-mutilation, rigidity of thought and habit; obsession with weight, food and body image. We sought escape through many other forms of obsession. We often blamed those who love us most for our agony. We were depressed, anxious, chronically irritable and unhappy. We experienced complete defeat only to emerge – just hours or days later – with renewed resolve to cling to the same attitudes and actions that brought us to ruin in the first place. No matter what we tried, we somehow couldn't face reality, deal with it effectively and walk free.

There is no magic about recovery. It is hard work. We were powerless to change until we came to believe we could recover. We then surrendered – usually in fits and starts -- to the uncomfortable process of making deliberate changes in our response to life. This process of giving up our old reactive coping mechanisms and adopting new, deliberate, active skills and attitudes gradually restores our integrity, self-esteem and authority. This is not an overnight matter. There are sure to be setbacks, moments of deep unhappiness and fear, yet we found that when we work diligently and patiently, we are amazed by a quality of peace, happiness and usefulness never before imagined.

We wish this for each of you, whether you find recovery in or out of these rooms. We hope you will find something here that you can use and that you may find opportunity to share your experience with still others, for such work brings calm and freedom from despair when all other measures fail.

We wholeheartedly welcome you to join us as we trudge the Road of Happy Destiny together.