



November: Thanksgiving or Gratitude?

As FRESH nears the end of its celebration of 15 years' renewal services in the St. Louis area, I wanted to share with you some of my reflections on the gift of gratitude.

I believe thankfulness is something we can all practice. My European immigrant family had to learn about and then emulate the American traditions around Thanksgiving Day: turkeys and family dinners. Those of us in recovery from addictions are often told by our Sponsors to make a "Gratitude List", when resentment and wingeing overcome us. But I think the list is a Thankfulness list - things and people we practice being thankful for. And our self pity is lifted when we do.

Gratitude, however, is an inside job. I feel it is the natural upwelling which can come as the result of being spared, or coming through a war, or being given a special gift. When I think of my own story, I knew that if I would ever feel gratitude to be an alcoholic, I would be able to maintain sobriety. Luckily that day finally came, at the end of my 8th Treatment.

For me, the expressions which flow from gratitude are many - thanksgiving is one of them. And service is another. There's the story of the man who has achieved enlightenment, who has seen from the top of the mountain. What does that person do? Stay there and have fun? She comes down the mountain and shares the message with all others.

When I was taken to my last treatment it was by a student in a public detox. She was in Al-Anon. She drove one and a half hours to deliver me, and when asked how I could repay her, she told me she considered this part of her 12 Step work, and that in that tradition, I might "Pass It On".

This was a revelation to me, that the fountain of gratitude, which fuels us -- is available as that deep deep well which we can tap daily, to carry on our work of mending others and letting ourselves be healed.

Out of this tradition, I feel blessed to have been of service, and urge you all to continue to Pass It On, wherever your ministry may be.

- Cheryl McKinley

Quick Updates...

The Karen Casey weekend was a phenomenal success with eight overnight guests and 35 commuters attending the weekend sessions. We are very thankful for all who were able to attend. We also appreciate Karen's unwavering support for FRESH and her commitment to yet another seminar in 2007.

The Workshop will continue online, as Karen leads in a year-long writing course that is open to anyone and everyone. See the article on the next page for details.



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Online Writing
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EVENTS & SPECIAL NOTES

- **The Holiday Candlelight** will be held at the Center on Sunday, December 3rd (starting at 3 pm). This special gratitude event is our most heartfelt way to conclude the year amongst the FRESH community. At this free event, we provide turkey and beverages and invite you to bring a salad or dessert. We will have a featured speaker, and afterwards our candles will turn the room from dark to light. Don't forget to bring your own candle!
- **Prices** for Day Use: \$20 and Overnight stay: \$35. Scholarship available upon request. Call Bernie at 636-482-4528, to make your reservation.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE...

The newly re-designed FRESH website is now up-and-running with a new set of features, among which are an interactive calendar and news updates. But by far the most exciting addition is an online workshop section that is intended to complement our recently held annual Karen Casey weekend. Both male and female, attendees and non-attendees to the event are invited to participate in a year-long online course.

Karen Casey is the best-selling author of *Each Day a New Beginning*, the first daily meditation book written expressly for women in recovery from addiction. Published in 1981, *Each Day a New Beginning* has sold more than three million copies and has been translated into ten different languages.

The format of the workshop takes on a blog/journal style, whereby Karen posts

periodical writing prompts that participants will be able to log on and view. They can then write in response to Karen's entries and receive guidance and tips from her as the year progresses. All the journals will be accessible only to those taking part in the workshop in a secure, password-protected environment.

We invite you to enroll and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. The registration fee is \$25.00 for year-long access to the course material, discussion board, journals and feedback from Karen Casey. Upon signing up, you will receive an email with your unique password and username.

For details on registration, please call Cheryl at (636) 482-4548 or visit our website at www.FreshRenewal.org.



Today may there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.... May you be content knowing you are a child of God... Let His presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.