

Hi everyone! I'm Barbara, a compulsive overeater. Welcome to this workshop on Surrendering.

This will be a group participation activity for those of you who care to join in, but before we do that, please allow me to talk at you for a few minutes on this topic.

Anyone who has read the Big Book knows that Bill Wilson had a non-alcoholic doctor, Dr. Silkworth, help him with this Program. What Dr. Silkworth did was explain to Bill what he thought our actual problem is. His theory is that we have an allergy to certain substances and when we put these in our body, they create a physical craving and we have an obsession of the mind that even when the substance is not in our body, we can't stop thinking about it and at some point we give in and ingest the things we know will eventually kill us.

Based on this and other information, Bill, with his Higher Power, wrote the Big Book which is a book of instructions on how to work the 12 steps and the 12 steps are a set of instructions on how to get rid of the things blocking us off from our Higher Power, how to connect to God, and how to stay surrendered.

What most people don't know is that our co-founder, Dr. Bob, also had a non-alcoholic doctor help him, but with the other end of our Program: how to stay recovered.

This doctor's name was Harry Thiebolt and Harry Thiebolt wanted to find out what magic ingredient enabled a person who had tried for years and years unsuccessfully to then come to a 12-step program and be able to finally put down their substance and he wanted to find out what made some people continue to stay in recovery while others did not.

Harry Thiebolt's theory is that when a newcomer came into a 12-step program, their ego was smashed and those who stayed recovered were people who, through their actions and thoughts, continued to do the things that would keep their ego reduction permeant. Those who were not successful were people who had their egos rebuilt.

And there are many ways the ego rebuilds.

Some of these are: the person started having an opinion of themselves whether they were the best of the best or the worst of the worst; the person started criticizing what God was doing by thinking they should have more, have things change quicker, or that they were the ones in control of what would happen in their lives, or the person started thinking they were everyone else's Higher Power by judging, criticizing and trying to control what other people think, say and do.

When applied to the steps, the ego rebuilds in these ways:

People don't learn the steps, they don't work the steps as outlined in the Big Book, they are improperly taught how to do the steps, or after learning the steps, they don't live in steps 10, 11 and 12.

People forget their step 3 decision to let God be in charge of everything and they start to believe they are the ones in control of one or more aspects of their lives.

They forget the important lesson they learned in step 4 - that they have a part in everything - and instead they go back to staying angry and blaming others for the things they are unhappy about.

They forget their step 7 and think they are the ones who will remove their character defects or they become impatient with God's timing.

They forget to do, had not been taught correctly how to do or don't realize the importance of doing step 10 – which is at the exact moment they are angry, fearful or harmful IMMEDIATELY doing steps 4-9 so they can get rid of whatever has just blocked them off from their Higher Power, reconnect with Him and learn to be the opposite of their character defects.

They forget their step 11 and don't pray and meditate and even if they do pray, it becomes prayers telling God what He should do -- instead of just saying "Thank you" or "Please tell me what you want me to do and give me the strength to carry that out."

And they forget that step 12 means that their purpose in life is to help others and instead they go back to focusing on their own selfish wants and needs.

So, according to Harry Thiebolt, the way to get recovered and stay recovered – in other words, the way to not relapse – is to have your ego smashed and then do the things necessary to make the ego reduction permanent. And the only way to have that happen is to do everything the Big Book says to do, stay in a constant state of gratitude and completely surrender to your own concept of a Higher Power every waking moment of every day.

So how does smashing my ego and surrendering help me stay abstinent?

To answer this, I have to ask two other questions. The first is: What is my disease and the second is: what makes me a compulsive overeater.

To answer the first question – this is my disease. (1) I get feelings. I am restless, irritable, discontent, full of shame, remorse or guilt; (2) As soon as that happens I get a memory that says that eating will stop me from feeling like this; (3) I believe this and start to obsess that I have to eat, I have to eat, I have to eat; (4) I then give in and take the first bite -- usually of something that I'm allergic to; (5) As soon as I take that first bite I trigger the allergy which causes the physical craving; (6) Once the physical craving occurs I have no choice but to binge; (7) I eventually stop because there's no food left, I get sick, or something else happens; (8) I then say I am never going to do that again and; (9) I keep that promise until the next time I get these feelings; (10) Then the whole cycle begins again.

The answer to the second question is this:

There are 2 things that make me a compulsive overeater. The first is that I have an allergy to certain substances – for me it's white flour and pure sugar. When I put these in my body they create a physical craving. The craving feels like this to me: my mouth waters, the back of my

throat pulls, my heart beats faster, my stomach crunches, my body is actually vibrating and my brain is screaming “eat more, eat faster, eat more, eat faster” and these things don’t stop until there’s nothing left to eat.

The second thing that makes me a compulsive overeater is that I have an obsession of the mind that gets triggered whenever I’m not completely neutral. So it doesn’t matter if I’m sad, bored, or upset because of some real or imagined occurrence. When I’m not at neutral my brain says “I have to eat or I’m going to die.” As soon as this happens, I immediately start eating huge quantities of the foods I just swore I would never eat again – I start eating huge quantities of the foods I know will make me fat.

Because I have this allergy that causes a physical craving and because I have this obsession of the mind, a few things happen: *Once I start eating, I can’t stop; if I do stop, I can’t stay stopped, at certain times I can’t control the amount I eat; and I eventually break every promise I ever made where food is concerned.*

Here’s the truth: food is not my problem. My problem is that my brain believes that the food is my solution.

Here’s how this works: let’s say my boyfriend cheats on me. This is before Program so I don’t know how to do a step 10 to get rid of the resentment or do the necessary actions to make sure this does not happen again. So I keep thinking about my boyfriend cheating on me and each time I do I eat over this and while I’m eating all I’m doing is focusing on getting and eating food. When I’m done bingeing all I’m focused on is what a failure I am because I just broke another diet. The food does exactly what it’s supposed to do – it gets me out of right here/right now -- so that I don’t have to continue being unhappy by focusing on or dealing with what just happened in my life.

This happens because, as a compulsive overeater, the part of my brain that houses the fight or flight response gets triggered over things that are not really life threatening. As soon as I am restless, irritable, discontent, have feelings of remorse, shame or guilt, the fight or flight part of my brain kicks in and I have no choice but to eat.

If you were to hold my head under water, I wouldn’t have to think about what I need to do to get out of this situation because my frontal lobe, the decision making part of my brain, immediately sends a dopamine message telling every part of my brain and body to save my life.

It’s the same for me when a part of self gets hurt, threatened or interfered with or when a character defect rears its ugly head – every part of my body and brain thinks it is saving my life by obsessing about and eating the food

When I first came to OA and admitted I was powerless – my ego was reduced. I had people paying attention to me, I felt a part of, I had hope and a whole bunch of other great things happened – all things that kept my fight or flight response from being triggered. And these things and the tools will work for a period of time. But at some point, if I am a *real*

compulsive overeater, I will get blind-sided by something that will make me run to the food for comfort and if I have not worked the steps as outlined in the Big book in order to have a Higher Power in my life I will have no defense against picking up the food.

This is where the steps, maintaining the ego reduction and surrendering come in. When I do the steps as outlined in the big book I get rid of everything from my past that made me need to eat and by doing step 10 properly, I short-circuit the fight or flight response by immediately getting rid of the cause of my discomfort and reconnecting to my HP, thereby eliminating the need to use the food. When I live in step 11 and am constantly grateful and following my Higher Power's direction, I am not triggering the fight or flight response and when I live in step 12, I am so focused on helping others that I don't have time to notice the things that used to upset me such as what others do and say or don't do and say and, at this point in my recovery, nothing on the outside affects how I feel about myself.

When my ego is smashed and I stay surrendered I get recovered and stay recovered because if I don't focus on me, if my ego does not rebuild because step 10 stops the reemergence of my being selfish, self-seeking, self-center or in self-pity, if my character defects don't come into play and if I feel useful by helping others, the need to run to the food for comfort does NOT happen and that is one of the things that what makes being abstinent easy.

So that being said, let's get started on Surrendering. What I'd like to suggest we do is get in one big circle. Please bring your piece of paper with you as well as your white flag. Then we'll go around the circle and everyone will have a chance to read what is written on their paper and then, waving their white flag, say what they are willing to surrender. After everyone has had an opportunity to do these 2 things, we'll open the floor for sharing and questions.



**THERE ISN'T A SINGLE
PROBLEM IN MY LIFE,
INCLUDING FOOD OBSESSION,
THAT WOULD NOT BE
RESOLVED BY**

**SURRENDERING
TO GOD.**

When I

SURRENDER

**I get to the point of oneness
with everything.**

**When at oneness there is
love, compassion and
understanding for everyone.**



**The act of
SURRENDERING
Gives me the chance to
change my future.**



**The power that runs the
whole universe
is available to me if I**

SURRENDER.

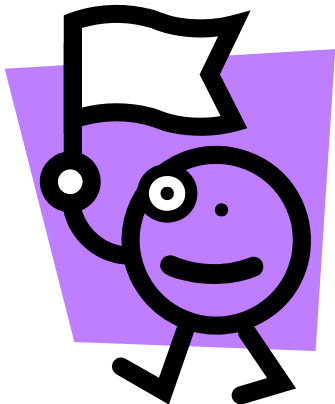


SURRENDERING

is an emotional step
in which the ego,
at least for the time being,
acknowledges that it is
no longer supreme.



SURRENDERING:
Going Over To The
WINNING SIDE.



I

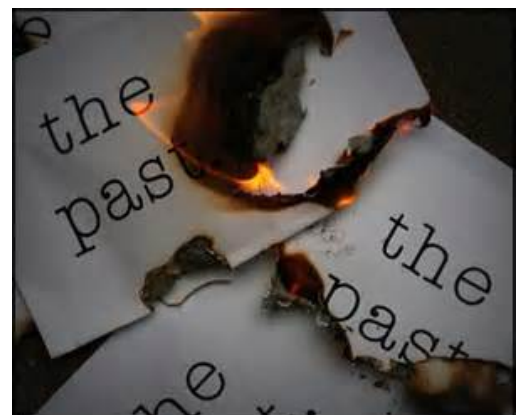
SURRENDER

the following to God:
how I think about food, how I think
about my body, what and how I eat,
what I should look like, what I think
about, what I should have, how I feel as
a result of outside things and what
others should do.

When I

SURRENDER

the past ceases to
have any power.





**The only time I really
have this program
is when I get down
on my hands and
knees and**

**SURRENDER
to God.**

To let go in

SURRENDER

has despair at its source –
the feeling of “I cannot go on
like this” and “I am licked.”



The GREAT NEWS is the
minute I do this,

God takes over.

The universe
will conspire
FOR me if I

SURRENDER.



When I

SURRENDER

and truly feel

“Thy will not mine be done,”
I become an
obedient servant of God’s.

A spiritual life at that point
becomes a reality.



Today I
SURRENDER
to
HAPPINESS.



I

SURRENDER

the following to God:
how I think about food, how I think
about my body, what and how I eat,
what I should look like, what I think
about, what I should have, how I feel as
a result of outside things and what
others should do.

SURRENDER

to God
who is all love
and no opposite.



Complete

SURRENDER

is the foundation of
SERENITY.



Acceptance indicates that
I'm
doing something.

SURRENDERING
IS ALLOWING GOD TO DO IT.

--

Acceptance is only partial surrender.

SURRENDERING
FREES ME FROM ALL TRACES OF
SELF THAT HAD BEEN FIGHTING
GIVING UP FOOD.

SURRENDERING
IS GIVING UP
BEING THE BOSS
AND
JUST BEING HUMAN.



If I don't

SURRENDER,
I'll keep hitting
BOTTOM



without anything
significant happening.

I HAVE TO

SURRENDER

SURRENDERING

EQUALS MY EGO BECOMING **HUMBLE**.

I can't remain pompous and self important.
My personal considerations can't be first and foremost.



Things that have to be **SMASHED:**
pride, arrogance, pushiness, dominating ways, attention
seeking, aggression, being opinionated, headstrong,
stubborn, determined and impatient.

I become
VICTORIOUS

the minute I

SURRENDER

the fight to Him.



It is only when I

SURRENDER

being in charge that the
reality of abstinence with
peace of mind enters my life.



Instead of resolutions,
promises and vows, I mark this
day as I will all others: by

SURRENDERING

my will and my life to God, I
give up trying to handle my
food and my weight.



It is possible to
gain what would
normally

take years of struggle
by simply

SURRENDERING.





There isn't a single problem in my life, including food obsession, that would not be resolved by

SURRENDERING
to God.

When I

SURRENDER

to God, I become free
to live as I had hoped
and dreamed.



When I

SURRENDER

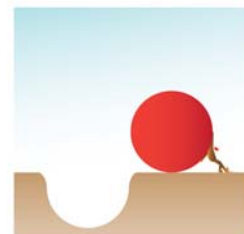
God will free me
from my self-
destructive
willfulness.

SURRENDER

*everything that
compulsive overeating means
trusting that God*

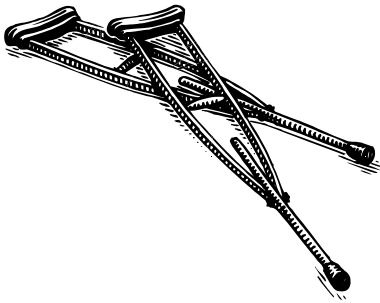
will

*put something incomparably
better in its place.*



SURRENDER

*the crutch of food to a Power
greater than myself, which is
doing for me what I could
never do for myself.*



LIFE BEFORE

SURRENDER

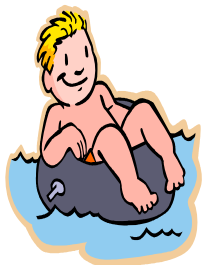
IS A BOXING MATCH;

--

AFTER

SURRENDER

IT'S SMOOTH SAILING.



SURRENDER

**and
become
who
I was meant to be**



Old Me ↗ New Me

SURRENDERING is

not based on external things

—

it's an internal shift of
realizing God is the only thing
strong enough to stop this
insane life.



It is only when I

SURRENDER

**and give up control
that my life
goes smoothly.**



SURRENDER

*does not mean
that I take no action.*

*It means that
I take action*



and

SURRENDER

the results to God.

When I

SURRENDER

a miracle happens

~

*I become willing to do the things
I need to do to get well.*



WHEN I

SURRENDER

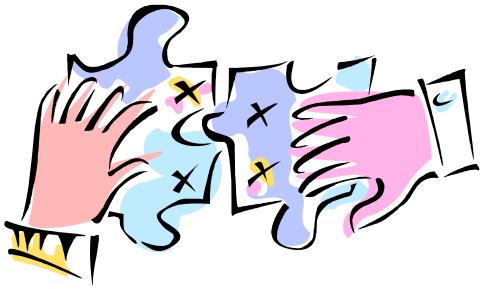
**I ACTIVELY ATTEMPT
TO BECOME A PART OF
SOMETHING BIGGER,
GREATER AND
MORE POWERFUL
THAN I AM**



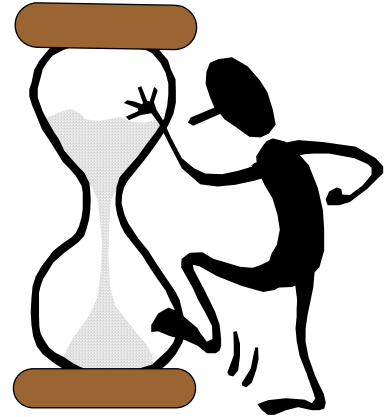
When I

SURRENDER

I FINALLY feel
like
I fit in



My self-centered, selfish, self seeking,
egoistical, want-it-now, impatient self
has to be changed.



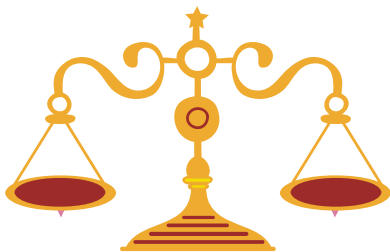
This change happens only when I

SURRENDER.

SURRENDER

my opinion of myself.

**The ego wins if it convinces
me I'm no good and it wins if it
convinces me I'm the best.**



SURRENDER

**to the wonders
in the world,
including the
presence of a
Deity who makes
all this possible.**



It is my ego that is the enemy of abstinence
and it is my ego that must be disposed of if I
am to attain a new way of life.
I get rid of my ego when I

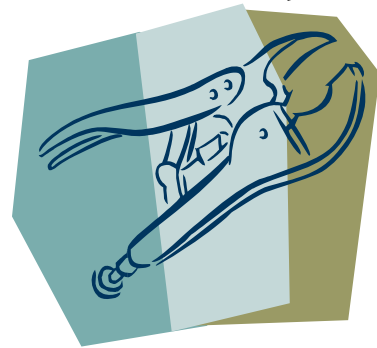
SURRENDER



When I

SURRENDER

my ego has lost
its grip.



SURRENDERING

is learning to be nothing
but a plain ordinary person
who merges with the human race
and as such is humble
and lost in the crowd
and essentially anonymous.



The capacity of the ego to
bypass experience is
astounding and would be
humorous were it not so
tragic in its consequences.



The only way to avoid these
consequences is to

SURRENDER

I NEED TO STOP

SURRENDERING

TO THE FOOD



AND START TO

SURRENDER

TO SOMETHING MUCH GREATER THAN ME.

The blissful

💭 pink cloud 💭

state is a logical
aftermath of

SURRENDER.

The ego just quits and
I feel peace and quiet
within.

I'm not going to feel better
nor is my life going to get better
until I work the steps.



I can only work the steps
correctly when I

SURRENDER.

The more the

SURRENDER,

the more freedom I
have.





When I



SURRENDER

I quit fighting,
admit I'm licked, accept I'm powerless
and know

I NEED HELP.

--

As soon as I

SURRENDER,

that

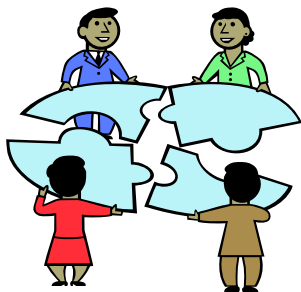
HELP APPEARS.

There is danger in assuming
the ego is dead and buried.

Its capacity for rebirth is
utterly astounding and must
never be forgotten.

That is why I must stay in a state of

SURRENDER.



The reduced ego, scattered,
unintact,
makes abstinence possible.
I don't have the capacity
to keep my ego reduced by
myself.

I HAVE TO

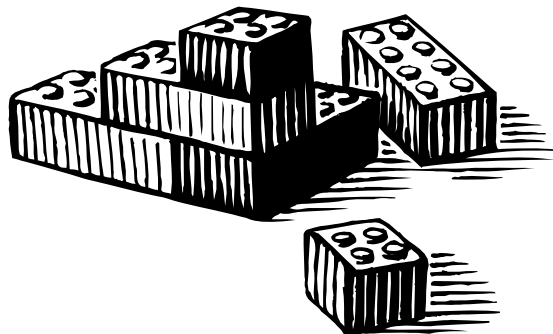
SURRENDER.



MY EGO

The ego will rebuild.
The awakening is
not enough.
After I awaken
I need to stay

SURRENDERED.



The solution is to make
the ego reduction
permanent. The only way
to do this is to

SURRENDER.



I NEED TO STOP

SURRENDERING

TO THE FOOD
AND START TO

SURRENDER

TO SOMETHING MUCH
GREATER THAN ME.

Whatever is blocking me now
is just as dangerous
as what was blocking me when
I first started.



The only way to get rid of
whatever is blocking me is to

SURRENDER.



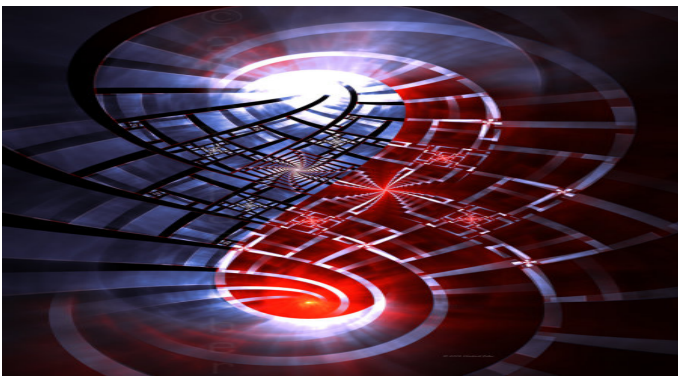
I have to be watchful.

Any success can become ego fodder, boosting my
rating of myself where I use this as evidence of my
special worth. My negative reactions spring from
the demands of an inner unsatisfied person.

My ego makes me think I should get to do what
I want without interruption.

The only defense against this is to

SURRENDER



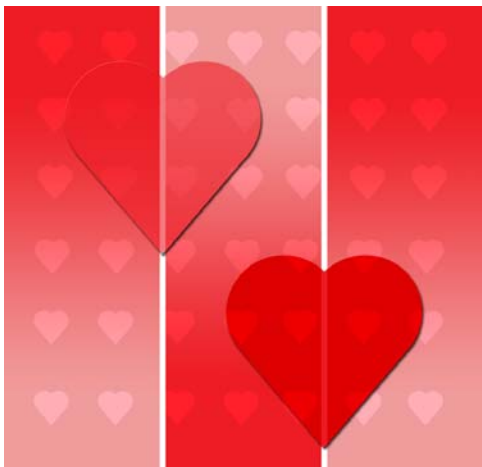
When I

SURRENDER

I start to rely on the
POWER OF GOD
for strength, guidance,
and healing.

I become humble when I

SURRENDER

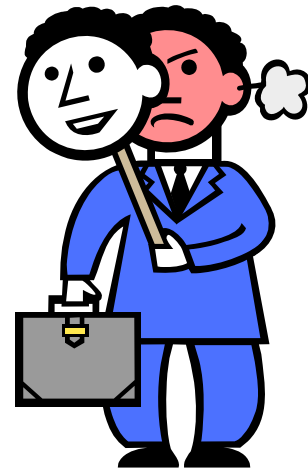


Humility is simply a clear recognition of what and who we are.
We have gotten down to our own right size.
Humility is understanding we are worthwhile.
It's the middle ground between the extremes of grandiosity and intense shame.
We now have a sincere desire to become the best we can be.
It is being our true selves.

When I

SURRENDER

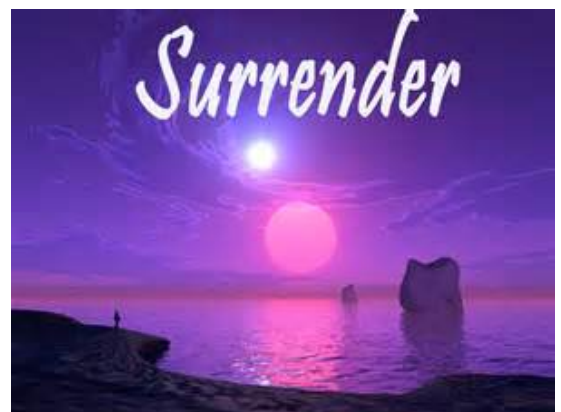
I can give up all the anger
And all the pretenses



When I

SURRENDERED

a Power came into my life
and now I have a manageable life
free of
anger, fear and harms to others



When I

SURRENDERED

I learned the difference
between being in the
grace of God and having
conscious contact with
Him

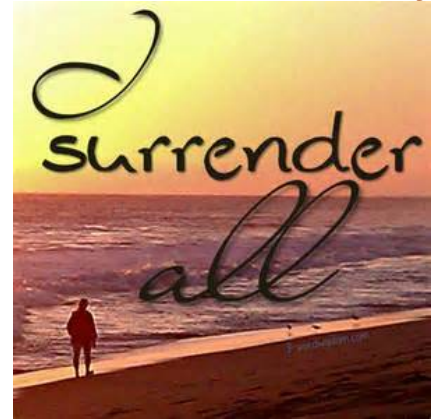


I

SURRENDER

when I live in Steps 10, 11 and 12.

This is what stops the
reconstruction of my ego.



When I

SURRENDER

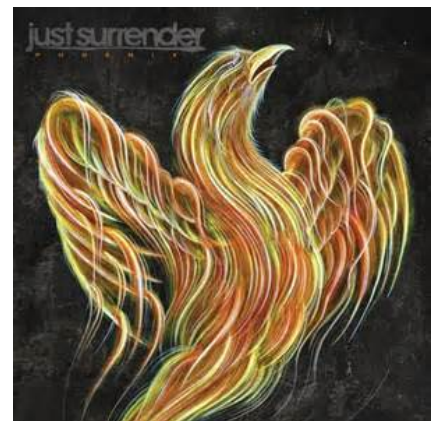
I get to the place where God comes first. I get to the place where I stop being selfish, self-seeking and self-centered. I get to the place where I fit comfortably in my own skin and in this world. And I get to the place where fear has been removed and replaced by trust and love.



When I

SURRENDER

I soar knowing that I never have to feel
lonely, abandoned, depressed, anxious,
worried, helpless or fearful because I'm
connected to the one thing strong enough to
keep me safe – and that's my Higher Power



When I

SURRENDER

I get the opportunity for
a better life



With

SURRENDER

Anything is possible



SURRENDERING

is not about giving up,
it's about letting go.



Once I

SURRENDERED

I realized God has
always
taken care of me.



When I

SURRENDER

the most precious areas of my life to God,
it's like trading in a pile of worthless pebbles
for a truckload of priceless jewels.



When I

SURRENDER

*I transform into something
beyond what I could have
ever imagined.*



SURRENDER

It's time to let go...
(Everything will be okay.)



SURRENDER

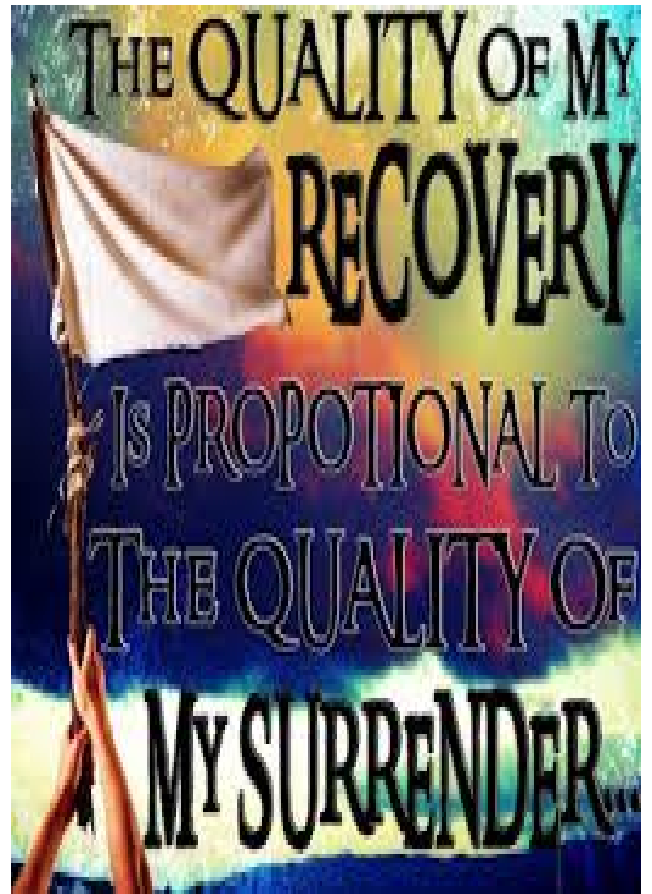
And be free



SURRENDER

--

The time has come
for me to give up the burdens
that I know I have
no control over.



SURRENDER

It's what gives
God permission to fix
All that is wrong in my life.



There are no levels of surrender.

Either I

SURRENDER

or I don't.

What is my choice going to be?



SURRENDER

*Is another way of showing that I
trust that everything is unfolding
The way it is supposed to.*



SURRENDER

*And realize that
great things are waiting for
me around the corner.*



When I

SURRENDER

I am placing my life into the hands of the One
whose grace holds all blessings,
whose heart holds all goodness,
whose favor holds all kindness,
whose ways hold all righteousness,
and whose will holds all love.



The minute I

SURRENDER

I let go of all the things that make me unhappy.



When I

SURRENDER

I am actually saying
that things are moving in
God's direction.



Tomorrow's freedom
is found in today's

SURRENDER



When I

SURRENDER

*I let go of what was
and
have faith in what will be*

I know
ONE PERSON
who will
NEVER
give up on me
GOD

When I

SURRENDER

I stop being afraid.
And at that point I start to
do the things that will
set me free.



I AM STRONGEST
WHEN I AM FULLY
SURRENDERED

TO GOD,



When I

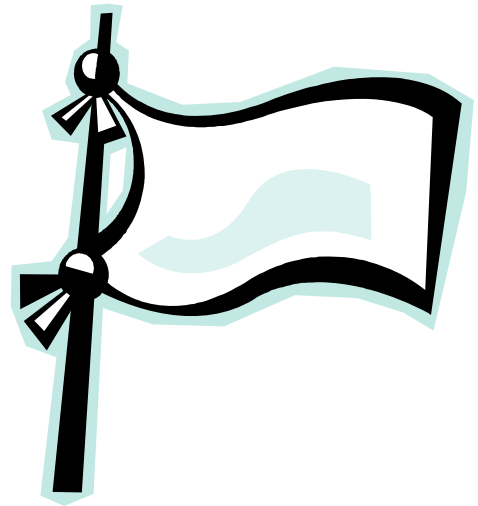
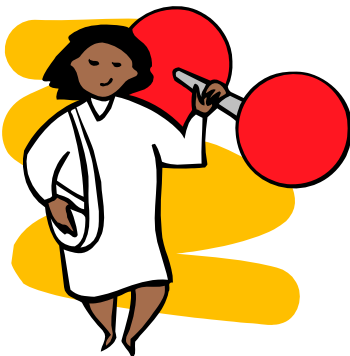
SURRENDER

*I learn to do what inspires me
and
trust that the universe will support me.*



SURRENDERING

is
NOT
weakness.



I Surrender!