

Breaking the Cycle:

Getting Beyond Recovery

Presented by George V. Nostrand

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Dear conference participant,

We have been asked to provide handouts in advance for our presentations at this conference. This is nothing new to me. Neither is the perplexed look on a person's face when I refuse to hand out my PowerPoint presentation outlines after I speak.

I do not speak to give you information you do not already know, or that cannot be found in numerous different books. I speak to inspire you with my story, and what I have learned from the stories of hundreds, probably thousands of other people I have met in the past twenty years. You will either get it, or you won't. You will either decide to open your mind to the truth that everyone can and should recover from mental illness, or you will cling to your old beliefs and excuses.

If you are a person struggling with an illness, I hope you will hear me and be inspired to take personal-responsibility for your recovery and stop worrying about what everyone else thinks. You will seek out opportunities, rather than seeing only barriers. You will leave the past behind and amaze yourself at what you can do in the moment.

If you are a family member, I hope to you will stop grieving, avoid enabling at all costs, forgive yourself, and live a healthy and happy

life as an example of how things can be for your loved one. You will realize that just because your family member is ill or has been ill does not mean he or she will always be that way. You will work with your family members, his/ her professional providers, and natural supports in the community to create a team that does not “do for”, but makes doing “do able”.

And if you are a provider you will realize it is a whole new world out there. In this day and age of recovery you must work in partnership with your clients, learning to guide and facilitate versus manage and control. You will see that every time you do something for someone, you take away an opportunity for them to learn. You will realize that it is your job to open doors and encourage your clients to walk through them, even if that means walking out of treatment.

Have I scared anyone yet? Maybe - but there is no time to waste. Time moves forward and change can take such a long time. How will you play a role in Breaking the Cycle? What does it mean to “Get Beyond Recovery?” I challenge you to think about these and other statements in this handout and hope that people will challenge me before, after, and during the conference.

Thanks,

George V. Nostrand

www.georgebygeorge.com

