



# Fractal Pilgrims

## Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



I had a good friend in seminary whose email address was fractalpilgrim@... “Fractal Pilgrim? What’s that?” I asked him one day. I didn’t much care for advanced mathematics, so I must have missed the geometry lesson on fractals. You may have missed it too. So, what in the world is a fractal? What does it have to do with pilgrims – let alone with recovery from addiction?

A fractal is a shape for which any part of the shape is similar in shape to a smaller or larger part of the shape. A snowflake is a fractal. The molecules that make up each individual snowflake are similar in shape to the larger snowflake. Pretty cool, right? Fractals can also be found in tree bark and broccoli buds. When you hold a prism up to the light, the larger rainbow color cast through the prism holds the shape of the prism. The light is fractal.

My friend recognized he is a pilgrim in this world. He is on a journey to God’s new creation secured through Jesus’ death and

resurrection. His pilgrim path is but a small part of the grand story God is weaving in his world. He wanted his life to be a fractal – a smaller version of that larger shape. He wanted God’s light to shine through him into something much larger and more beautiful.



Recovery from addiction is a fractal journey. Each part of recovery holds the shape of the larger process. A life in recovery will refract the light and cast the colors of the larger beauty of God’s work to redeem a broken life and world. When I invite inner healing through counseling and prayer into my heart to heal trauma, then I connect to the love God and others have for me. When I experience safety and connection in caring friendships, then my brain heals and begins to function as it should because I’m now living in authentic relationships. When I develop loving beliefs and emotions rather than wounded ones, then I can open my heart to relate to those who love me. When I learn healthy coping skills rather than diseased ones, then I find my true self in relation to others. When I develop healthy desires and rituals rather than compulsive and destructive ones, then I move toward God and others in trust and love. When all this happens, I experience life and relational wholeness that reinforces the inner healing.

Did you notice the themes? Love, trust, relationships. That’s the shape of healing - of recovery. That’s the fractal whose shape applies to every stage of the journey, no matter how big or small. That’s the light that can shine through us in brilliant radiance.

At Starlight at Tamasee, we believe moms and children can take the fractal pilgrimage. They can shine with the light of Love. They can learn the joy of living in relationships of love and trust. To learn more about Starlight, visit [www.starlight.tdarschool.org](http://www.starlight.tdarschool.org), or contact us at 864-944-1390 or [starlight@tdarschool.org](mailto:starlight@tdarschool.org). If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at [jholland@tdarschool.org](mailto:jholland@tdarschool.org).