



Satisfaction Guaranteed

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



“Satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back!” You’ve heard that promise, I’m sure. Maybe on a late-night TV infomercial or at a kiosk in a retail store. I’ve heard it too. From indestructible pots and pans, to a used car that will run forever, to vacation time shares you can redeem anywhere in the world, the promises feel a bit empty, and experience teaches us to be jaded. So, the first time I heard someone promise the Twelve Steps were guaranteed to work if only we worked them, I was skeptical.

Yet, after nearly twenty-five years of being involved in the work of recovery, I know that promise is true. I can’t think of a single person who authentically and consistently worked the Twelve Steps who didn’t recover. Satisfaction really is guaranteed.

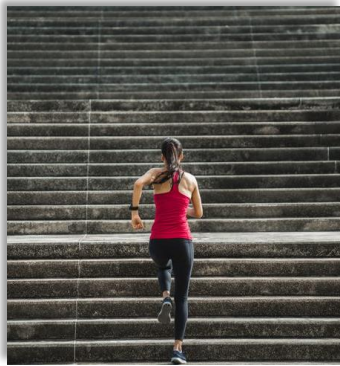
Now, this doesn’t mean the Twelve Steps are the only approach to recovery that will work. There are other successful paths, and I thank God that’s so. The epidemic of addiction in our world needs all the good faith efforts we can muster. The promise also doesn’t mean that people working the Steps and attending Twelve Step fellowships never relapse. Most of us struggle in the early months and years of recovery. The

wounds are deep and old, and the work is hard. The Steps don't promise we won't face difficulties; they promise we can recover if we keep doing the work.



And what is the work? First, abstinence. We must create the space to heal, and as long as we're still relying on our addictive substance or behavior, if we are still medicating our brains to avoid the feelings and pain, we won't recover.

Second, a spiritual experience. We lack the willpower, the resolve of spirit, to overcome our problem. We need a new heart. We need a Power greater than ourselves to overcome. This Power is a Presence within each of us. We start from the place of our understanding, and God meets us where we are. He loves us more than enough to help us when we make even the tiniest of baby steps toward him – even if we don't call him by his true name or trust his character fully yet. Whether the spiritual experience awakens us in a flash or is a slow train coming, the healing of the spirit, heart, and will is the essence of the work. The Twelve Steps guarantee this renovation.



Third, perseverance. Those of us who deal with an addiction are accustomed to quick fixes and easy solutions. The Steps invite us to the long, slow path of surrender, honesty, restoration, and connection. We learn over time to trust God, clean house, and help others. I've met folks in recovery who say the Steps don't work, but when they share a bit more, the truth is the Steps weren't worked. Maybe they didn't finish a moral inventory (Step 4), or they don't practice prayer and meditation to know and do God's will (Steps 3 and 11). For the steps to work, we must stick with the work.

At Starlight at Tamasee, we believe moms can find the satisfaction of a recovered life. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.