

Wishing You A Slow Recovery Race

“Progress Not Perfection”

It took me several years and some humility to realize that I started this process like I was going to win a prize for finishing any task first and the best. By tasks I mean the steps. I tried rushing through the steps as fast as I could so I could brag about my advancements. I was reading all 40 pages of my 5th Step within months of entering the program and when I was done I thought “Well that didn’t work “. I even went as far as to Google how long people spend writing this step and what is the average number of pages people write so I could do it better and longer. Then I thought well Steps 6&7 are coming up next and I will be getting rid of all of my character defects like magic and I will become such a good person very quickly. Well those steps came and went and guess what.....I was still a hot mess. So moving on.... I know I’m about to make good on all of my past behaviors in Steps 8 & 9 with a few phone calls and then smooth sailing to the finish line. Awww..... Perfection! It didn’t quite happen like that!

Looking back I came in to the program 100x more broken than I ever believed to be true and through several years, several sponsors, starting the steps over and over, a lot of meetings and a whole lot of tears I am doing the steps in a fresh state of mind, at a new stage of sobriety and at a slow and steady pace. I don’t want to rush I really want to do the steps slowly and really drink in every detail this time around.

Since I have stuck to the program even after I tried speeding up my process like I was going to win a first place ribbon and tried to fight the process along the way I have learned some valuable lessons. People can sit in the same AA meeting, hear the same message, have the same sponsor and friends, and work the same program—but they seem to be in completely different races.

I started wondering why.

Then one day I thought, maybe it’s because we have all entered a different kind of race at different stages of the race, and we’re all running as different animals.

“I’m Wishing You A Slow Recovery Race”

(I hope you don’t win first place!)

I am going to tell you about several different animals in this so-called race and you decide which one you are now and who you want to become.

The Rules:

1. There is Not a finish line
2. You can change into another animal at any time during the event
3. Always keep an open mind and remain a willing contestant to see progress

The Contestants:

Frightened Deer:

- Some people come into recovery like a frightened deer in a sprint.
- They bolt out of the gate fast, full of fear.
- Every sound makes them veer off course.
- They don’t trust the track, the crowd, or even their own legs.
- They run like something is chasing them—because for a long time, something was.

The Turtle:

- They don’t rush the race.
- They don’t try to impress anyone at the starting line.
- They just begin... slowly, carefully, one step at a time.
- They’ve been hurt before, so they don’t sprint.
- They don’t even jog.
- They walk.
- And sometimes they stop.
- But they don’t quit.

The Hummingbird:

- Darting from lane to lane.
- Helping other runners.
- Checking on everyone else's progress.
- Signing up for every support station.
- But never really staying long enough in their own lane to feel their own feet on the ground.

The Owl:

- Some are owls watching from the stands.
- They study every runner.
- They analyze every strategy.
- They know the rules of the race better than anyone.
- But knowing the race isn't the same as running it.

The Porcupine:

- They've stopped running, but they still bump into everyone with their spikes out.
- They argue with other runners.
- They criticize the pace of others.
- They protect themselves so fiercely that no one can run close to them.

The Sheep:

- They start a little behind so they can just follow someone else that has been on the track before
- The sheep is worried about what others think of their performance in the race
- The Sheep doesn't think she will ever catch up to the other contestants

The Wolves:

- Then there are the wolves running in packs.
- Sometimes they don't realize others are running alone right beside them.
- They find rhythm in community.
- They pace each other.

- They encourage each other.
- They understand that no one finishes this race in isolation.
- A lone runner doesn't go far.

As the race goes on, something beautiful begins to happen.

The frightened deer stops sprinting in panic and learns to steady her stride.

The hummingbird finally lands and finds her pace.

The porcupine learns to lower her defenses.

The owl steps down from the stands and enters the track.

The wolf learns that sometimes slowing down for someone else is part of the win.

The sheep begins to trust herself in the competition and builds quiet confidence.

And then, something unexpected happens.

The turtle keeps going.

Slow.

Steady.

Unimpressive to the outside world.

But consistent.

Present.

Willing.

And while others burn out, rush ahead, or drop out...

The turtle just keeps showing up.

One day at a time.

One step at a time.

And in the end...

The turtle just might win the race.

Not because she was the fastest.

But because she never stopped.

Because she didn't try to outrun the other competitors.

She stayed in it.

She stayed honest.

She stayed willing.

Then she crossed the finish line of the race for only this day because she kept up with her steady progress.

None of these race styles are permanent.

Recovery isn't about being the fastest.

It's not about winning against others.

It's about staying in your lane long enough to heal.

So I ask you now:

What kind of runner are you today?

Are you sprinting in fear?

Or walking in honesty?

Are you running alone?

Or staying connected?

Are you trying to win?

Or trying to recover?

Because every day we are in the race...

And whatever pace we choose...

Becomes our path.

And Just For Today, because of this program, because of the women in these rooms, because of my Higher Power...

I don't have to sprint anymore.

I don't have to compare.

I just have to keep going.

And if I'm the turtle today...

That's enough.

Because in this race...

The turtle wins.