

I am extremely honored to be able to share with you what Visions Anew has done in my life.

I grew up in an emotionally superficial family. No matter how I tried to be happy and feel wanted, it was denied time and time again. I knew only one thing. I knew what I was told. I was worthless.

Growing up in a very small New England town, I did what was expected of me. I dated 1 person for 10 years then married him. For 22 years I strived to *earn* a love I thought would make me whole.

The person I was before my divorce was a person *who* on the outside had the perfect life; a nice home, three wonderful children, 2 dogs and the *image* of a happy marriage. It was *that* image that was shattered the day my ex-husband announced his plans for divorce.

Although my marriage was far from happy, it was all I knew. It was the only thing that I thought defined: as a Mom, as a Wife, as a Person.

Everything I thought I knew about myself was suddenly in a tailspin. I no longer had a purpose. The fabric of my fragile life was shredding as if someone had just pulled on that nagging piece of thread and it was unzipping faster than I could stop it.

I couldn't think. I couldn't speak and make any sense. I couldn't stop crying.

A friend and former **Visions Anew** participant told me to check out a website. In desperation I logged on and saw a 4 hour seminar being offered.

Feeling that I had nothing more to lose, I attended. At the end of the seminar a door prize was given. The woman whose name was drawn for a discount on a retreat weekend had sat next to me during the seminar. She was a former retreat participant herself.

I don't know her name and I couldn't pick her out in a crowd but she was my angel that day. She knew that I needed **Visions Anew** and she gave me her prize. Frankly, I thought I didn't deserve her offer. I didn't know.

Before the retreat, I was nothing but a shell filled with self doubt. I felt that I had failed at the only thing I was on this earth for.

I saw this gift of a retreat as an excuse to disappear. Knowing I'd be gone for 3 days, no one would come looking for me. I wouldn't tell anyone of my destination. No one would even know where to begin looking.

My children were nearly grown, they would miss me but they'd survive.

As I packed for the retreat, I brought little; I wouldn't need anything for what I was planning.

I began my drive toward the retreat location looking at every overpass, densely wooded area and side road that offered promise for my escape. It seemed like a never ending drive. I was on auto-pilot... Just driving toward the unknown.

When I found myself pulling into the retreat location, I noticed a wooded path veering away from the building. That would be my chance. I had to buy some time.

I was greeted at the retreat center door with a smile, a hug and a warmth I hadn't expected.

Still, I was buying time.

The first night I found that I was not alone in my feelings. A glimmer of hope was far in the distance. With a chocolate on my pillow and a very hopeless feeling, I went to bed. The next morning came too fast. I found that I had slept soundly for the first time in years.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day was filled with the most wonderful and empowering information. Still, at the first chance I had, I slipped away onto that path to make a decision.

Would I continue to walk deep into the woods and never return or would I face my fears and deal with the hopelessness that burned within me?

I found myself walking back to the retreat center still wondering if I were making the right decision. That evening we participated in a very powerful candlelight ceremony and a burning of our deepest fears.

As I watched my fears turn into flame and then to ash, I felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. My eyes cleared, my heart felt lightened and I began to look people in the eyes as we spoke. Suddenly I had a purpose.

*I had to survive. I had to make it.* I had a reason to live and I smiled.

When I returned to what was my *old* life, I held close to my heart, the words that Margot and all the presenters offered.

It wasn't until many months later that I told Margot what had happened that weekend.

I laughed out loud one day and it surprised me. I realized that I didn't know that I had an audible laugh. Today I can't stop smiling and laughter is a huge part of my day. I started looking for new things that would keep me whole.

Before **Visions Anew**, I was truly a walking corpse. Today, Life is beautiful and even more so at 14,000 feet.

I SKYDIVE and the only current questions I have is ....  
When can I do it again? And can I go higher?

Thank you Margot,  
Thank you **Visions Anew**.  
Thank you for showing me that I have worth,  
self-esteem and hope.