



Rebuilding lives  
 Removing stigma  
 Restoring dignity  
 Resource  
 for mental health recovery

**Visions of Sugar Plums?**

We've all heard the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" or better known as "T was the Night Before Christmas", by Clement C. Moore. One of the lines is "the children were nestled all snug in their bed while visions of Sugar Plums danced in their heads". I began thinking...what exactly is a sugar plum?

It took some research but what I found was this. Sugar Plums are not plums at all, but rather dried fruit of any type, or may not contain any fruit all. A traditional recipe from the early 1700's didn't even contain fruit, rather it was almonds, honey and aromatic spices like fennel or anise. Whatever, they were, it was something that took a very long time to make and was very expensive to make. As a result if families had these at all it was only during Christmas, but often the cost of getting the spices and nuts were too expensive.

So now you're thinking what does this have to do with GOC? Sugar Plums were a rare treat which most people didn't have access to. Some people who were very poor may have never have eaten them, but would have known what they were. Mental Health Recovery is like that. It is something that takes years to achieve, and doesn't happen overnight. It is something that not all people living with an illness have access to. It is also something that all our members dream of having.

Each member dreams of what his or her life would be like if they had not gotten sick. Dreams of jobs, families, and friends, plaque some members; some tell of being so close to those dreams only to have them taken away by an illness. Families try to understand but they never fully do. Employers let you go because you've missed too much work, and friends fade away because their lives move forwards and members tell me that theirs have moved backwards.

Recovery is available to anyone, but you have to know it is possible to achieve. If no one tells you that Mental Illness is Recoverable, how would you know? Each day members come to the clubhouse in search of recovery. Some tell us how they have been looking for something like this for years, while others have known about it but weren't ready to come. GOC is the "Vision of Sugar Plums".

We give people hope, we give people options, we help people find their lives again, and move forward. In the upcoming pages you will read articles about Goals, Dreams and Visions, articles about the previous year, and what strides people made. Members may share their joys and sorrows, successes and barriers...but in the end all our members are moving forward. So this is their "Visions of Sugar Plums."

-By Pam D.

**Fun January Factoids!**

- January in the Northern Hemisphere is the seasonal equivalent to July in the southern Hemisphere
- January always begins on the same day as October, except in Leap Years.
- In Leap Years, January always begin on the same day as April.
- January is National Soup Month, and National Thank You month.
- January 3rd is National "Fruit Cake Toss Day!"
- January is named after the Roman god Janus, who had two heads; one to look back to the previous year, and one to look forward to the new year
- The Roman Senate in 153BC, declared January 1st to the beginning to the new year.
- During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church was opposed to celebrating the New Year. It has only been celebrated in the Western World for about 400 years
- Average high temperature in January in Florida is 58.1...compared to Massachusetts...which is 29!

Happy January!



Inside This Issue:	
<b>Our Members at Work</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Birthdays &amp; Calendar</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>New Member Interview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Uncharted 3 Review</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2014 and 2015: For Me</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Newest Member!</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Power of Now Review</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2014: For Andy Bernard</b>	<b>5</b>

The Gainesville Opportunity Center's Board of Directors	
Trish Sokol - President	
Andy Bernard - Vice President	
Jennie Whitson -Treasurer	
Vacant -Secretary	
Markus Dietrich	
Jodi Irving	
Warren McCluney	
Ryan Jones	
Kathleen Ryan-Poirier	

## IMPORTANT DATES

★HAPPY★HAPPY★HAPPY★HAPPY★  
BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY!

JANUARY 2015

1st New Year's Day  
19th Dr. Martin Luther King Day

**January:**  
3rd Tommy Lee A.  
4th Madeline B.  
8th Tom N.  
10th Michael M.  
14th Carol B.  
15th Marcia F.  
17th Patrick M.  
20th Tanya P.  
22nd Michael S.  
30th David J.



## Our Members at Work: Clubhouse Employment, Education, and Volunteer Work

Education		
Member	Location	Degree
Jane B.	At Home Professionals	Med. Transcription
Debbie O.	Santa Fe College	Business
Carlos C.	Santa Fe College	GED
Chris P.	Saint Leo University	Business

Volunteer Work		
Member	Position/Work Site	Hours/Week
David S.	Dog Walker/Gainesville Pet Rescue	2
Greg W.	Horse Care/Mill Creek Horse Farm	8
Chris P.	Volunteer/St. Francis House	varies
Dave B.	Writer/Bread of the Mighty Food Bank	7
Lloyd B.	Language Arts Teacher/Grace Marketplace	1.5

Supported and Independent Employment		
Member	Position/Employer	Hours/Week
Andy B.	Kitchen Asst./St. Francis H.S.	25
Andy B.	Dishwasher/Meridian	5
Joel A.	Customer Service/Gainesville Carpet & Flooring	32
Regis G.	Clinic Supervisor/Discount Counseling Network	3
Frances S.	Peer Specialist/Meridian	16
Tommy A.	Stocker/Catholic Charities	4
David J.	Groundskeeper/Meridian	4
Regis G.	Social Worker/undisclosed	40
Jade W.	Customer Service/Full Cup	20
Ashley R.	Peer Specialist/FACT Team	40+
Gregg W.	Courtesy Clerk/Walmart	30
Alexis H.	Peer Specialist/Shands Vista	12
Ron M.	Grill Cook/Five Guys	25

Employment Quote of the Month

“In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, look around you.”  
— Leo Tolstoy

### CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Lloyd B. for teaching the GED class at Grace Marketplace!!!

- *Need a job?*
- *Don't know what you should do?*
- *Submitted applications but haven't gotten a job?*
- *We can help!*

Stop by Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday to see Brett or call us at 224-5523

## January 2015 Calendar

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>New Years Day</i> <i>Club Closed</i>	2 <i>Club Closed</i>	3
4	5	6 <i>Club Closed</i>	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 <i>Club Closed</i>	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 <i>Club Closed</i>	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 <i>Club Closed</i>	28	29	30	31

## New Member Interview: Tom Zych

I found out about GOC in a chance meeting with someone who told me it was a place for people with mental health difficulties, where they can help you find work. None of the three local mental health professionals I've seen ever mentioned it. I had never heard of Clubhouses until now.

I've been looking for work for a while. I have Asperger's Syndrome and depression, and it's hard to find work and to be around people and stay cheerful. I've been unemployed for over a year. It has been pretty depressing looking for work, because many jobs demand good people skills, or have noisy environments.

Before I came to the club, I was studying web coding and working on my novel. I'm from New Jersey originally. I've lived in Gainesville since 2008, after finding a local job.

Nobody knew what Asperger's Syndrome was until the early 1990s, and I didn't suspect I

had it until I was 39, so I was just this "weird" kid who didn't get social interactions. My depression is situational. I have a hard time getting and keeping jobs. I don't have a lot of friends. It's hard for me to converse or concentrate when people are talking. Since being diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, I have a better understanding of what causes my problems and a better idea of what kinds of things I need to avoid. Living on my own helps; I need a lot of quiet alone time.

Brett has been very helpful with looking for work and ideas to try. It is heartening to see the people here who have their own troubles, staying positive and looking for work. The clubhouse helps by giving me useful things to do.

I am very good with computers and data, and have been helping Brett with a list of employers that received federal money and thus

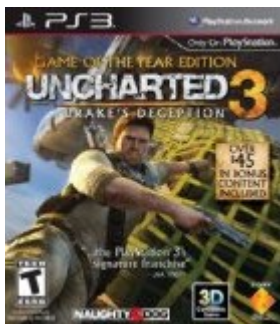
must employ some people with disabilities. I've also been helping with some information tasks, and proofreading the Gazette and resumes. I am good at proofreading, computer programming, and generally working with data. I have a lot of confidence in my ability to solve computer problems.

I want to figure out what kind of career I can enjoy and do well. I want to find more friends that I can get along with. I want to try to make a career out of my writing.

I enjoy reading, writing fiction, watching anime, and gaming. My lease doesn't allow pets, but I feed a friendly stray cat in my neighborhood.

-By Chris P.

## Video Game Review: Uncharted 3:Game of the Year Edition



If you like your games well done, then this game is cooking for you! Uncharted 3 is one awesome game that almost plays as if you were “playing” a movie. The graphics are well done. The sound is well done. The acting is well done. The controls are well done. The presentation is well done. The whole game is well done. Just like the video review on ign.com says, Uncharted 3 is more than a video game, it is an experience. This experience, however, is only for PlayStation 3.

I must say that I bought Uncharted 3 (not the Game of the Year Edition) from Amazon.com, and the game would only play so far until it would freeze up. I downloaded the latest patch at my friend’s apartment, and the game still froze. So, wanting to continue playing this game that was awesome so far, I bought Uncharted 3: *Game of the Year Edition* from Game Stop to see

if another version of the game would work, and...it did! The Game of the Year Edition even continued from where the game left off from the regular version of the game and played almost perfectly to the end. I say *almost* because the game did freeze once, after I “died” in the game, but I decided to wait for it to load again—and my waiting did pay off—it took about 5 to 10 minutes, but eventually, the game loaded to the point where it should have loaded. The game did freeze up one other time towards the end of the game, but the game “fixed” it’s self within less than a minute. That being said, I would recommend that you play the Game of the Year Edition if you plan to take Uncharted 3 for a spin.

The game takes place from the 3rd person—3rd person shooter style. But the game is more than a 3rd person shooter—it is part adventure game, part puzzle game, *and* part 3rd person shooter. There are also real-time rendered cut-scenes throughout the game.

Basically, the story of the game is the good-guys trying to make it to the “treasure” destination before the bad-guys. The feel

of the game is sort of similar to that of Indian Jones. While playing the game, you also pick up “treasures”, some being in more obvious locations than others. While viewing the game statistics after I beat the game, I saw that I picked up 41 out of the 100 treasure—and I mostly picked up all the obvious treasures in plain view. A helpful feature in the game is that treasures and weapons, both of which you can pick up, flash white every once in a while, making them easy to spot.

So, to conclude this article, I would recommend this game to pretty much anyone who likes action/adventure games, especially to people who like 3rd person shooters. There is even a multiplayer mode that got good reviews on ign.com, but is not being reviewed here because I don’t have internet access in my apartment, and therefore can’t play it. I would also say that it is worth the risk of having the game freeze up on you to experience the experience that is Uncharted 3. And, heck! You can buy the Game of the Year Edition at Game Stop for around \$7! Happy gaming!

-By David S.

## 2014 and 2015:For Me



This past year (2014) was a big one for me. Some of the things that happened during this past year are that 3 people that I knew died, and I adopted 2 dogs. I have also recovered a little bit more on my road to recovery: I am managing my anxiety better and I feel that I am in more control of myself and feel more peace inside me.

One thing that I have decided to do starting this past year is that I am trying to avoid the super anxiety feeling that I get sometimes. If I can tell that doing something would trigger intense anxiety, then I will

not do it, instead of doing it—and then needing to meditate and/or relax to “come back to center.” Also, if I am in a situation where I can tell that I would have super anxiety if I were to stay where I am or do or not do something, then I would (if it would be practical) take a break, or do something that would avoid the anxiety the best I could (instead of being in the situation where the anxiety would grow and become “super,” or “intense”).

Adopting Buddy and Holly (my dogs) has given me a reason to get up in the morning because I feed them and walk them in the morning. It has also helped me to be more responsible because I take care of them.

In this year (2015) I plan to continue avoiding anxiety, continue taking care of Buddy, and Holly, and possibly/maybe/hopefully start a relationship if I can find the “right” woman. If I don’t, that would be alright, but I will probably keep the possibility on the back burner somewhere. I also plan to try to be in the present moment more deeply. These plans are not necessarily what I would call my “New Year’s Resolutions,” but they are something that I would like to do this year: 2015.

-By David S.

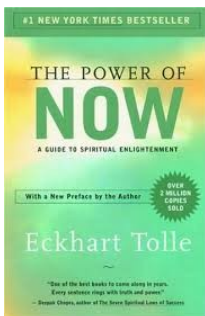


Welcome To Our Newest Members!

# Tom Z.



## Book Review: *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle



*The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle is one of my all-time favorite books. I've read it 4 to 5 times, and every time I read it, I get something new out of it. Recently, this time that I've read the book, one of the things that I liked the most was the feeling of peace that I felt when I

read the words. I have felt this peace before, when I have read the book, but this time the feeling of peace is one the things that stood out the most for me. One of the topics covered in *The Power of Now* is that every-thing eventually comes to an end, and when I finished the power of now, I wanted the feeling of peace that I felt when I read it to continue, so I have tried to be more present in my life to keep the feeling. So now that I have told you how I feel about *The Power of Now*, just what is it about?

Eckhart Tolle basically says in *The Power of Now* that humanity has a mental illness. This part of the book may trigger feelings of resentment in people who are mentally ill, and who work with people who are diagnosed with mental illness. They may say or think, "You say humanity has a mental illness? You don't know what it feels like to have a mental illness!" or similar things. Even the DSM-5 now views mental illness has a continuum—that even the general population "has" a mental illness—that they lie somewhere on the continuum or spectrum, but their symptoms just may not be acute enough for them to be diagnosed with having a mental illness. And, Eckhart Tolle says the reason that the human race is mentally ill is that they identify with

the mind—and the way that Eckhart uses the term mind here is that it is all thoughts and emotions—and make the mistake of thinking that they *are* their mind, so much that it's dysfunction can be seen all throughout history: countless wars, rape, poisoning the planet that sustains them, and torture just to name some of the dysfunction and unconsciousness that humans have inflicted on each other and their planet. When you read *The Power of Now*, Eckhart will show you how not being in the present moment creates emotional pain and how your past pain not made conscious exists in you as your "pain body." He also shows you how when you identify with the mind, you identify with the "pain body," and how when you are identified with the "pain body," you want both to inflict pain, and have pain inflicted on you—of course this wanting of pain is unconscious if you are still identified with the mind. Eckhart also shows you how to be conscious of your pain and therefore "dissolve" the "pain body," helping you to be more in tune with who you are and therefore feelings of peace.

So, how does all of this have to do with the present moment? Eckhart says that the present moment is inseparable from who you *really* are: the present moment includes presence, stillness. By worrying about the future, or the past, you may feel anxiety or depression. By being connected to the present moment, you feel peace, and joy, and peace and joy is what Eckhart Tolle says is the natural human state. He says through the un-natural process of mind identification (and therefore not being in tune with the present moment), people feel psychological pain—and this pain (not feelings of peace and joy) shows up for some people as anxiety and depression—just at different intensities for different people.

He also says that who you are in your essence *is* consciousness. He says that you are the awareness or consciousness that is aware of your thoughts and emotions—not just the thought or emotion itself. And he says that when people are spiritually unconscious, they unconsciously identify with the mind (and are then not in tune with the present moment)—and it is always *unconscious* identification. So you could say that all of human insanity—examples listed earlier—is because people identify with the mind unconsciously and think that they are their mind, and that humanity can regain its sanity by being conscious of their thoughts and emotions (which comes naturally with being in the present moment).

Eckhart Tolle does a wonderful job designing the outline that the book is presented in by making it into a question/answer format. The whole book is based on questions (some generic questions, some specific questions that people have asked him). This format encourages the reader to ask his or her own questions concerning spirituality.

So, to wrap it all of this up, *The Power of Now* is a wonderful book that basically outlines spiritual enlightenment (and spiritual enlightenment is synonymous with spiritual consciousness and being in tune with the present moment). I would highly recommend it to anyone who lives with a mental illness (it has helped me tremendously with dealing with my mental illness), or to anyone who would like to feel peace or joy—and I'll mention here that Eckhart says that who you are *is* joy and peace, its just the "noise" of your busy mind that distracts you from it.

-By David S.

## 2014:For Andy Bernard



I work at St. Francis Catholic High School as a kitchen assistant and dishwasher with Chef Marty Slevin. I find the labor easy and the food good. The work schedule is seasonal. Summers are

off for classes. During the summer I work with maintenance and janitorial.

Since I'm married I do not have Florida

Medicaid for pharmacy. I pay a high deductible: \$318.00, but I'm eligible for "extra help," or "low income subsidy" through Medicare Part D (PDP Provider) which means I have a \$200 credit on my Genoa Pharmacy Balance at Meridian Behavioral Healthcare.

April 14th, 2014 my wife (Jane), and I went deep sea snapper fishing at Cape Canaveral, Florida. I caught one small snapper. Jane was a little seasick.

On January 2nd, 2015, Jane and I went horseback riding at Fr. White. We wore our leather boots. Her horse was a mare named Hanna, and my horse was a gelding named King. We got a discount fee with [www.groupon.com](http://www.groupon.com) with BC Quarter Circle Ranch. We paid \$72 for 1 hour for both of us.

-By Andy B.