

ISSUE NO. 15

MAR-APR 2016



# STEP 12 MAGAZINE

Carrying A Message of Hope in Recovery™

## HOPE is a Virtue

**Pain Relief: The Muscle/Nerve Connection**

*by Batsita Germaud*

**Part 4  
The Neurobiology of Cannabis Abuse**

*by Dr. Keerthy Sunder*

**Hope for Healing**

*by Carol Tietelbaum*

**Love Vs. Fear**

*by Terra Schaad*

### INSIDE:

- Horoscopes
- Puzzles
- Recovery Resources
- Humor Page
- Newcomer's Page





# Dr. Judi Hollis

Experience, Strength, and Hope  
For People Struggling with Food Obsession



## Which Came First? The Body or the Confidence?

Men and women agree the most attractive feature of a potential partner is confidence. Yet, we often judge our value by what we see in the mirror. We tend to judge and assign value to the tangible image reflecting back through eyes tainted with pre-determined expectations of “good” and “bad.”

With this self-critical, often distorted, self-view we limit our experiences. We postpone the cruise or avoid the beach until we lose our excess weight. We judge ourselves critically and expect others to do the same. We falsely assume we can't have fun “until...” We live in that “when I get thin” bubble.

Every human being has the right to be respected and appreciated for their unique talents and abilities. Our inner qualities will shine through whether they convey confidence or insecurity. If a person wants to convey confidence, it's important to experience life as a classroom and absorb all the lessons it offers. Today.

When we think we don't deserve to go to the beach because we are too fat, we are cheating ourselves out of a potentially beautiful experience with nature. When we think we don't deserve to be thin, we cheat ourselves out of an opportunity to achieve our optimal health. When we think nobody will love us unless we are physically flawless, we cheat ourselves out of rich and meaningful relationships. It's not about the external aesthetics, it's about optimal health emotionally, spiritually and physically.

If you're telling yourself that you have to lose weight before you can date, or travel, or attend your class reunion, you may be feeding your insecurity rather than bolstering your confidence. Moving outside our comfort zones provides us with opportunities to learn and grow. Learning and growing

provides us with opportunities to boost our confidence. Twelve step sponsors often advise, “fake it 'til you make it,” or “act as if.”

“In college, I was terrified of public speaking. Speech 101 was a required course that I waited and waited to take. In my last semester as a senior, I was forced to take the class. I vomited before every appearance because I was fat and scared. I just knew the audience would only see my weight and judge me cruelly.

“Years later, when I had the opportunity to be on National Television, those old feelings of fear sprang to life. Well, really, anyone would be nervous to go on The Oprah Winfrey show. This experience was outside my comfort zone. I had confidence in my material—I had been working in the field for some time, had been successful with my books, and was considered an expert on weight loss and healthy living. I had lost the weight, yet still felt the fear of being judged harshly.”

Those old thought patterns are difficult to shake. Self-confidence and a sense of “deserving” are internal characteristics that have nothing to do with our external size, shape, color or gender. Building self confidence comes from defining your own personal comfort zone inside your particular and unique universe.

If you're not comfortable in your skin, try something new. Do something you said you'd do AFTER you lose the weight. Maybe you'll like it so much that the weight will become less of a burden and the self-love you feel in this expanded comfort zone will start naturally melting it off.

*Written by Karen VanDenBerg based on interviews with Judi Hollis.*

© 2015 Dr. Judi Hollis is a Licensed Family Therapist, author of several books and educational materials, motivational speaker, radio and television expert. Judi would love to hear from you! You can ask Judi questions and access her materials, at [www.judihollis.com](http://www.judihollis.com) or call 1-800-8-ENOUGH

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