

# ***The Art of Thriving***

## ***Beyond Recovery***

By Marion Aslan

Recovery Approaches to mental health are in danger of being dismissed as fanciful, ignored or perhaps even worse assimilated into mainstream medical practice. History is in the process of being rewritten as Recovery is claimed by those experts on the outside looking in – psychiatrists, psychologists and academics rather than being accredited to the survivor activists of our time. User led groups are a misnomer as they are often managed by workers with little or no direct experience of mental health illness, services or hospitalization. Service Users are often utilized in a tokenistic way which aids this assimilation into medical dogma by serving their master rather than their peers, leaving the bigger issues of coercive practice and abuses of human rights for those in distress undisclosed.

“The art of thriving” explores how these attitudes prevent and hinder growth for the individual in distress, and examines what is required to move beyond recovery to a place quite independent of psychiatry and maintenance – that place of emancipation, which leads to thriving.

*“The art of thriving” ... I can almost smell the colours that title conjures up! A title as poetic as it is meaningful because to thrive is truly an art form and the psychiatric survivor has, more often than not, been denied access to the paints and brushes needed in life to access their potential to recover much less to move beyond recovery and thrive.*

*The art to thriving however is not all about painting a pretty picture and Marion will surprise and even shock with her hard hitting analytical assessment on the complacency of psychiatry and the system in general, the complacency of the services and those who work there, and not least the complacency of those service users/consumers who seem satisfied to be the lap dogs of the psychiatric system to the detriment of those who wish to set themselves free and thrive...*

*Olga Runciman, Chair Hearing Voices Network, Denmark*