



## Comments from Visitors to “Fine Line: Mental Health/Mental Illness”

As you sit down, take a look at the picture in front of you: it’s black and white ... As you listen to their story, close your eyes. When you open them, the picture of the person speaking is now in color. Think about it.

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This is my 4<sup>th</sup> visit to this exhibit since it opened. Extreme? I have felt the need to share your exhibit with others close to me. My twin daughters, my dad and a friend in my neighborhood have all come with me. 60 photos (are) a lot to absorb in just one visit. My twin daughters (age 25) suffer from bipolar disorder and substance abuse. As children they were diagnosed with ADHD, as adults bipolar disorder. Thank you for the excellent display. This has brought to light the pain, struggles, frustrations and life challenges for them and others who suffer from one form of mental illness or another. After my 3<sup>rd</sup> visit, I encountered a man who suffered from schizophrenia at my job. This exhibit helped me feel compassion towards him instead of my normal judgmental ways. Thank you Michael Nye for shedding the light.

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My normalcy is so questionable – so irrelevant. Each of our journeys are so that: our own. There was such an awareness that no one whose journey is colored by mental illness needs my sorrow, my injury or my judgment. Not even my self-righteous compassion. This exhibit screams in a less than dark way that humanity, human dignity, self worth is imperative as our paths cross, intermingle and sometimes collide. Thanks for reminding me that I walk so close to the fine line.

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Every person on this planet should see this exhibit, just to know they are one car wreck or traumatic experience away from mental illness. We need to realize these people are human. Today I had a chance to step in their world, their minds. I am truly grateful for this experience. God bless all who had something to do with this exhibit. God keep the faces behind the illnesses. It’s not the illness that defines you, it’s how you define the illness. I suffer from panic attacks. It’s an every day struggle.

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Beautiful. Enlightening. Provoking. Beneficial. Great ideals, wonderful generosity, community commitment. Art for empowerment and awareness ... lovely!

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I think this is one of the best things I have ever been to. We go through life everyday not caring what these people go through. But after you listen to this, it makes you understand.

It makes you understand how these people live. It's wonderful! Thank you for showing me this.

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I too have schizophrenia. Thank you for clearing up common misconceptions.

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The exhibit was powerful and enlightening. Thank you. (Signed: A fellow human)

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There is beauty in imperfection. Your brothers and sisters have infinite love for you. Maybe others who have seen this will too. You are the real ones. Keep on living. Namasté.

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Very good portrayal of this little-known/recognized disease. We admire the photography, it captures the subjects' spirits well. The audio adds a wondrous closeness to their stories. As if they are comfortable shaving. Wonderful! Thanks!

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A major part of my life, I would always pray to God to be normal! I was teased a lot being a twin, always compared to my twin sister. So for a long time, I had never realized that maybe the things I was feeling and thoughts I was having were actually okay and possibly normal. I was diagnosed around 18 years old, and now being 25 years old, I can say I am at peace with myself – mentally, physically and spiritually. A huge relief has been lifted. I'm able to help others find love within themselves and whatever life may bring within it.

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To the creators of the Fine Line exhibit: Thank you for putting forward the question of what mental health is and the small distinction between normal and ill. The exhibit has made me wonder about my standards of judging. Perhaps we are all mentally ill in our own right.

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This is a wonderful exhibit to show tolerance and understanding for the human race. Everyone just wants self-acceptance. Thank you for showing mental illness in a positive light.

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My heart aches for those with these illnesses. There, but for the grace of God, go I.

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As a sufferer, all I can say is, it's about time! People close themselves off to their world and shield their thoughts from the reality that other people are not experiencing the same things. It's life, it's fact. Whether you accept this as a fact or not. My whole family suffers from one form or another of depression. I have no problem admitting it or its

effects on life, my life and the people around me. I believe genetics are 85% responsible, though others less informed would argue this point. Thanks for displaying reality!

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As mental health deputies, we found the exhibit very informative. We would hope that this would further educate and cause understanding in reference to mental health issues. Thanks to all persons who prepared this exhibit.

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It's hard to believe, but things like this happen to people. I just want to say to people like this good luck.

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My child was diagnosed with bipolar within the last couple of months. It was very helpful to see this exhibit and hear the stories of people, regular people, who were learning to cope with mental illness. Thank you for your efforts to educate families and to change public perception about this challenge life throws our way. My daughter is a beautiful, creative gift who will live each day to her full potential as we continue to learn and grow.

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Fine Line's opened my eyes to the world. Thank you.

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Wonderful exhibit. I thought the definitions of mental illness are so much more accurate than any those of us who are not diagnosed could create. I am amazed by the strength of these people and the willingness to educate and give to others. The advice of some was to be kind to others. How ironic it is for those diagnosed with mental illness to possess such clarity. Thank you for sharing and educating.

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Unless you have lived it, walked it, crossed it and come back a hundred times over, you will never understand mental illness, you will never understand me, you will never understand us. But please don't ever stop trying to. P.S. – I will not forget you Bonnie.

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This is a wonderful exhibit. It's so easy to view people as their mental illness, that sometimes it's hard for people to understand that the illness is just a small part of them, and there's so much more that others won't see. Thank you for helping people see the person instead of the illness.

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My initial reaction is that the exhibit misses the essence of mental illness – the darkness, despair and utter loneliness. Why is it as bright as daylight in here? It should be dark, with only dim lighting of the portraits. I understand now that that is not the intent of the exhibit. The intent is to shed light on it, to show to the masses that it exists in every walk of life. Doctors, firefighters, professors, janitors, judges, politicians, auto mechanics, nurses. No profession is spared. It does a fine job showing that it is not just the homeless

and the state hospitals. It also does a fine job of showing that mental illness does not necessarily equal insanity. This is an excellent first step. The next is to demonstrate the absolute turmoil these disorders create and the havoc they wreak in the lives of those afflicted, and then to show people the costs and other ways in which mental illness affects the lives of every citizen. We then can begin the process of learning and teaching more effective ways of caring for each other. I am very deeply moved by the courage of the 60 individuals who have shared a glimpse of their stories. I am inspired. The depth of character portrayed in this room overwhelms me. Thank you to them and those who produced it.

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We just had a 38-year-old mother of 2 boys die in another state. She was bipolar and more-or-less “drank and drugged” herself to death. My mother suffered from schizophrenia and had 2 serious hospitalizations, but with good treatment went on to function well as a wife and mother – dying at 89 yoa. It is disgraceful that Texas allocates so little for mental health services – 49<sup>th</sup>? Thank you for a really well thought out exhibit.

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Thank you for putting faces and voices together showing people and their diagnosis. Perhaps others fearing a diagnosis may see these real people and decide there is nothing to fear, rather, that there is hope in identifying problems. Special thanks for every time I heard one say to show kindness. The pain in these conditions is already there. Show much kindness. The best medicine of all.

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This exhibit was enlightening for my soul. My two passions, photography and mental illness, are in one setting. I close my eyes and truly listen to their stories and empathize. (This) is a great way to remind the world/us there is so much to learn and understand about this issue. I only wish more would enjoy such opportunities as this. I am attaining my MSW and only hope for further education. Inform professors about things like this to inform their students who can't get enough of education.

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I am impressed with the fact that someone wants to share their knowledge of mental illness and remove some of the prejudices.

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Heartfelt thanks for the pictures, stories that are touching, honest and sincere. It has raised an awareness, empathy and love for myself and for all of us who are one. We are all connected.

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On my God, I'm grateful that I'm blessed to have all of my senses and the ability to care for myself and to have the compassion to cry for my sisters and brothers here on these walls. I try to hold back the tears. I am so moved by these people. I walk through this museum being awakened by things, art, history of animals. But this is our sisters and brothers. I will pray for them, how I know. Jesus loves us all. My heart is heavy.

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I feel like this was a brilliant idea. I was told in 2002 that I am bipolar 2. I ran away, afraid of the idea of accepting the fact that I did need help. From having major depression – my depression held me back from getting help for myself. As I would self-medicate (not the right thing to do). Ever since I was a little girl, I felt tons of feelings that the people in the pictures express. I feel dead if I don't get help for myself, getting nowhere in life except a life I wish for myself in reality – but I escape in my dreams. I am 25 years old with one day hoping for a life that is freeing. I know the first step is getting out of bed. Then it would be going outside. Last, just believing that I can achieve my dreams. Thank you for everything.

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I can feel the hurt in some of the eyes in the pictures. Depression hurts every part of your soul and body. I feel like finally something like this exhibit can help others understand. My husband is deployed – this is his second time. I have three children and neither my children, my husband or family will ever understand I am afraid. They need to see this.

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Thank you so much for this touching and beautiful exhibit. As a woman who was sexually abused for years and having it ignored by my family and suffering from depression, suicidal thoughts and feelings of being a failure and sexual promiscuity, in this place, I am not alone. Thank you for letting me feel this way.

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Wow. I love the pictures and the symbolism in each one.

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I found the exhibit extremely helpful. Hopefully this will help pave the way for more resources and understanding for those of us with a mental illness. I have been diagnosed bipolar, borderline schizophrenia, PTSD, multiple personas from the age of 11+. Thank you for giving people the opportunity to learn and respect people with mental illness.

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This presentation allows the public a brief look into the life and struggles of people with a mental illness. Thank you for this medium. Please allow this presentation to be available at least twice a year.

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Remember – there is hope! Jesus cares. He sees. He rescued me from the abuse I survived. He's real.

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Fine Line is great. It really opened my mind to see all the problems people can have. I also think it's great that these people get to express what they are going through. It's one of the best things in this museum. These people make me think about all I have and make me grateful.

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There but for the grace of God ... Thank you.

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Jesus is here. And you are his child. Call out to him and he hears. I am schizophrenic (1999). He is our creator and he makes not mistakes.

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I am grateful to these people for sharing some of their thoughts, experiences and feelings about serious mental disturbance. There is so much more to a person than meets the eye. All of these people are very courageous in sharing their pain and in some cases their success in surmounting the illness. This exhibit was an exceptional experience.

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What a lovely gift! Putting voices with these pictures lets us hear the requests for kindness, understanding and acceptance. As a mental health professional, I could hardly wait to see this exhibit and will recommend it to everyone I know. A sincere thanks to you, Michael Nye.

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Hearing all of these people's different stories made me feel enlightened and intrigued to know more about these people. I've wanted to do something, anything to help people but mostly a psychologist or therapist. I would make it either low-cost or free and I would make hospitals where these people are treated as human beings instead of monsters, as they are in the public eyes! I feel like I'm more and more grateful for the life I have. I hope all these people have plentiful lives. This really opened up my eyes.

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To Mental Health Connection: A positive educational venture. Thanks.

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Great exhibit! Putting the "talking faces" in the realm of reality. We interact with them daily!

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Extremely powerful and great insight into mental illness.

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This exhibit was wonderful. Really helps understand other people. Thank you!

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After viewing this exhibit, I believe that my family understood a little more about my mania and depression. Thank you so much – keep up the wonderful work!

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We need more things like this to open people's eyes to the real world. So many grow up expecting everything to be perfect, but it never is. Welcome to real life. Everyone has their own problems. Open your ears and heart and just try to help sometimes!

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I know it's not really the best thing to think, but hearing things like this make me feel better because I don't have to deal with things like it. Then again, I know no one wants people to feel sorry for them, so I can't necessarily say I do feel sorry. All I can really say is: Hope they ALL find some form of happiness that'll allow them to want to continually go on, day-to-day. Life's too valuable to want to just throw it away, and I hope they all can be able to come to some terms of that. Thank you. The fact that someone enlightened upon this issue is amazing, and I want to try and help anyone with a mental illness.

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I have dyslexia. I still come to this building for a long time. 1957

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How do we reach members of the jury who would not visit this exhibit?

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Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for making it so real.

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As someone who suffers from depression, I found this exhibit to be an emotional trip within my own being. It took me years to find the right drug and dosage. When I once again could laugh, get out of bed, go to work and be excited to see a new day – my family and friends celebrated with me. Please thank the photographer and those responsible for the audio stories for me.

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Mr. Nye – You should send Tom Cruise a personal invitation.

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An excellent presentation. Mental Health/Mental Illness – no one at times can define the line! It is unfortunate that our culture and country do not budget moneys for continuing research and funding for the homeless – and for health!

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Fine Line: A beautiful way of talking about something that probably all of us have experienced one way or another (ourselves, a family member or friend) or most likely been near one and not knowing. It is sad the way we think about people with mental illness like they don't count! It opened my eyes, and (I) definitely will have more compassion and love.

Listening to these stories has made me appreciate my mental health.

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Thank you. Wonderful. Help at Depression Connection, 817-810-9599.

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I want to say thank you for this opportunity to hear and look at people with mental illness. (The exhibit) helps me appreciate my life more and I'll be here next time.

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I've been crushed like paper  
I've been washed like rain  
I've been scared of sleeping  
In case I wake up the same  
I've been broken and battered  
I've been lost in my home  
I've been crying a river  
I've been cold as stone

But falling into you ...  
It carries me far enough away  
And everything you do  
Lightens up my darker side of day  
I just hope that the wind  
Doesn't blow you away

I've been left unattended  
I've been thrown like a ball  
I've been rolled with the punches  
And don't feel a thing at all

I've been crossed by the wires  
I've been blinded by the light  
I've been burned by the fire  
I've been kept out of sight

But falling into you ...  
It carries me far enough away  
And everything you do  
Lightens up my darker day  
I just hope that the wind  
Doesn't blow you away

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My mother is a paranoid schizophrenic. Thank you for showing others. Maybe now they will understand. Thank you.

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I'm sorry for your problems. I hope you live a happy life. (From a child)

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This is one of the most beautiful, moving exhibits I have seen. Thanks for presenting it to us. It has touched my heart. Thanks again.

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What an interesting group of people. It makes you realize that we take for granted being able to slip from one group of people to the next. For example, we can go from work to home seamlessly, but these people, or ones like them, get stuck – or looked over. It is so bizarre to hear their stories, and it is super scary to identify with parts of them. Hopefully people take this seriously and don't just leave whatever they hear here. I hope they don't just walk out, yell at the kids for running or being too loud or whatever and just forget.

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Incredible insight on mental illness perception from the patients themselves. Amazing!

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I am also a person suffering from mental illness in my brain. But one thing I learn is to take my medication. Ever since then, I have been doing better.

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Being a photographer and having a brother with bipolar, this was a very touching exhibit. Thank you for the insight into the minds of those with many forms of mental illness.

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Bonnie – I will remember you.

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I want to thank you for this exhibit. It's extremely relevant to today's society. I think it's good to put a face on mental illness because it makes the subject more real. It's very easy for us to ignore or forget about mental illness because it seems as though it has just become part of everyday life. By putting a face to it, we are forced to look, listen and contemplate. I commend the organizations that sponsored this exhibit. Thank you.  
(Signed: Someone who's aware)

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When you look at the picture in front of you, listen to the words, but focus on the glass, not the picture. You may understand it better this way.

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They aren't that bad even for a kid like me. They really help express yourself. I am 10 years old. Thanks for the encouragement.

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Thank you for having the courage to open this exhibit and for providing it free to the public. What an awesome gift. I wish this could be a permanent exhibit for everyone to see.

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Fine Line helped me see that there is hope. I suffer from Borderline Personality Disorder. I wish that Fine Line will talk to people like me.

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I loved the pictures. They were beautiful. The stories really touched me. They were just amazing! I think that it is great you put a museum like this here.

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I thought they were all good. I listened to all of them and I bet it felt good for all of the people to share their feelings.

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Wonderful exhibit! Helps others without or unrelated to mental illness to better understand. Thank you!

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Thank you! Very moving and insightful. Hope springs eternal! Thank you again.

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Thank you for the exhibit. There are so many people suffering in silence due to the ongoing stigma of mental illness in our society. Hopefully this cruelty and ignorance will continue to fade with the help of the psychology field or other exhibits such as this one. It is extremely helpful for those suffering and for their loved ones that these people share their thoughts. It truly helps others. There are many people who do care and do not negatively judge those with mental illness who may only need to be educated on how to help. This is a huge start. Thanks for caring.

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Thank you for this exhibit. It is very informative and educational.

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It gave me a very good visual on illnesses. Thank you a bunch.

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What an amazing exhibit! Just to take a moment – one moment to stop and listen. Listen to the stories of real people. As an occupational therapy student, I am most interested in the psych setting for many reasons. I could have been a doctor or a lawyer, even a speech pathologist. But I chose occupational therapy because of what this exhibit portrays – the person is just that, a person. Thank you for sharing your stories! We – the world – need to be able to stop and listen to another perspective and embrace others for who they are no matter their problems. To my father: Oh what I wonder you would say if you were upon this wall. What would you tell us? I'm ready to listen! I miss you!

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Thank you for sharing and exposing information on mental health and mental illness. Our culture has a difficult time understanding the true underlying reasons why people with mental illness behave and act the way they do. This is a very powerful exhibit. I hope we can all learn something from Fine Line. Let's keep educating our society as a whole; professionals, parents, teachers and children. Great exhibit. Thank you.

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**What a powerful exhibit!! ... As I listened and sat before those people depicted, I felt I was being let into a special place in their hearts and souls. I remember one who talked about a tree he used to have in his yard and I actually felt I had visited his yard and knew the tree he described!! The artist did a great job. Thank you so much. And God bless the hearts of those who shared.**