

FOOD ADDICTS PHONE MEETING

READINGS FOR MEMBERS

Please read clearly, for all to understand

DEFINITION OF A FOOD ADDICT

Food addiction is a disease of the mind, body and spirit for which there is no cure, but it can be arrested a day at a time by our adapting to a disciplined way of eating and a Twelve Step program. When we abuse food by using it as a drug, our lives become unmanageable.

Food addicts have an allergy to flour, sugar and quantities that sets up an uncontrollable craving. The problem can be arrested a day at a time by the action of our weighing and measuring our food and abstaining completely from all flour and sugar.

We define abstinence as weighed and measured meals with nothing in between, no flour, no sugar and the avoidance of any individual binge foods.

HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember we deal with alcohol - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power - that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery.

TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over food- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to food addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating addictively.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or food addicts as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the food addict who still suffers.
6. A food addict group ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every food addict group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. We should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. We ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Our group has no opinion on outside issues, hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

TOOLS OF RECOVERY

ABSTINENCE: : We obtain abstinence from addictive eating by weighing, measuring, and committing our food to a qualified sponsor. We have found that we must abstain completely from all flour and sugar.

SPONSORSHIP: We ask a qualified SPONSOR to guide us through the recovery program on all three levels: physical, mental, and spiritual. Sponsors are committed to abstinence and to living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience. Ours is a program of attraction. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how it was achieved.

MEETINGS: We attend meetings, which enable us to identify and share our experience, strength and hope with each other. We have found that unless we give to newcomers what we have received from the program, we cannot keep it for ourselves.

TELEPHONE: Food addiction is a disease of isolation. The telephone is a means of communicating with another addict between meetings:

- a. We begin by committing our food daily to our sponsor.
- b. We share hope with each other.
- c. We have immediate contact with another Food Addict in times of stress.
- d. We call before we take the bite.

ANONYMITY: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program and is essential for our recovery. In order to get well, we must be able to speak openly and to trust one another. We reach out to help, but we do not gossip. What you hear at this meeting, stays at this meeting. Each person's story is his or hers to reveal. At the public level, we safeguard our anonymity by concealing our full names and faces.

LITERATURE: We read Twelve Step literature in order to strengthen and reinforce our program. When read on a daily basis, the literature impresses on us certain basic truths we have found vital to our growth. Literature is an ever available tool that gives us insight into our problem, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

WRITING: In addition to writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing is an indispensable tool for working the Steps. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper, or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. In the past, addictive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

QUIET TIME: To maintain our abstinence, we must learn to rely on a Power greater than ourselves. We set aside a full half hour each day to sit quietly and relax. In this time with our Higher Power, we listen, seeking the perspective, serenity, and strength that will enable us to stay abstinent and respond sanely to the challenges and joys of the day.

GRATITUDE: Food addiction is a disease of negativity. Our contented abstinence depends on our willingness to replace negative thoughts and feelings with thankful ones. In the past, we thought of gratitude as a feeling, but in this program, we practice it as an action.

SERVICE: We do service by staying abstinent, giving us the freedom from compulsion and obsession with food to allow us to be available to others. Any service, no matter how small, that will help reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Calling others from this meeting, answering the phone, sharing at this meeting, leading this meeting, sponsoring, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group, are ways we give back what we have so generously been given. Do what you can when you can. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as a result of working the Twelve Steps. Service fulfills that promise.

PROMISES OF THE PROGRAM

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.