

Grateful Compulsive Eater

When I came to OA, I was miserable. I was well over 200 pounds, depressed all the time, hopeless, and had one set of clothes I could wear – black stretch pants and a hoodie with a hole in the front. I kept saying I would work on my weight and food issues when I had gotten my depression under control. Someone suggested to me that maybe if I figured out my food and weight issues, it would help with my depression.

When I came to my first meeting, people greeted me warmly (even though I tried to hide). I didn't understand much of what was going on, but I knew these people had something I wanted. I saw thin bodies (as well as some like my own), but more, a look of joy on the faces of those around me. This was different from the commercial weight-loss programs I had tried.

At my second or third meeting, I asked someone to be my sponsor and got started. I was an atheist, and the people around me kept talking about God, but I decided to not worry about that right away. I started working a food plan, weighing and measuring all of my food, which I couldn't imagine keeping up for long, but that was the structure of the meeting I went to, so I just followed directions.

As I continued in OA, my weight came off, sometimes slowly, sometimes more quickly. What came off more noticeably for me was my way of being in the world – my feelings of self-pity, depression, fear of death, and the constant thoughts about food. I gradually started to take the suggestions of the people around me about working toward a faith that fit for me. I think it was a year and a half or so before I could use the word “God” without cringing.

Today, I've been weighing and measuring my food for over three years – every single thing I eat, every single meal. I've been a normal weight for my body for almost a year and a half (70 pounds down from my top weight, 20 pounds up from my low weight). I've developed a concept of a loving higher power, and I have not yet had difficulty with anyone that it's not the same God that they believe in. I find the fact that my higher power brought me to the type of meeting I attend, which uses weighed and measured food as a tool to get us out of the food, to be proof of God's love. Many people in OA recover, and we do it all different ways – my higher power knew I needed the structure and support offered by this way. I now call myself a “grateful compulsive eater” because of the number of gifts brought to my life by this simple, but not always easy, program of OA.

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