

My Journey to My Infinitely Better Life

What it was like

I weighed 254 pounds and was obsessed with overeating. I couldn't stop going to the fast food joint, convenience store and movie concession stand. I couldn't stop buying the large volume of foods containing sugar, salt, flour, and fat and consuming all of it in one sitting. I couldn't stop obsessing about food. I just had to have it. I couldn't stand the feeling of not overeating – it felt very threatening to me. That's why diets never worked – they were just too painful. Because of my overeating, I paid big consequences. I couldn't get out of bed or in and out of my car easily. I couldn't run when I was in a hurry. I had to sit or lean against something wherever I went. I woke up with food hangovers every morning from the previous night's bingeing. I worried about a heart attack and diabetes. I felt demoralized and morally weak.

What happened

I came to OA. I met someone there who'd been relieved of food compulsion and she was living a transformed life. She told me it was possible to be free of food obsession. She told me how she did it – that she had learned to put firm boundaries around the food itself, and then to follow the recovery program found in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. I wanted what she had, so I started doing what she did.

I learned about my physical sensitivity to certain foods and about my spiritual sensitivity to certain thoughts. I learned that freedom was going to cost me. First, I had to surrender my problem foods and problem food behaviors. Second, I had to surrender my personality. I learned that my personality did not work for recovery, and that I would have to experience a personality change to gain the freedom I craved. The program of recovery in the Big Book made this personality change possible. I began to experience relief of characteristics like self pity and a desire for vengeance, and began to experience characteristics like patience and empathy.

What it's like now

I'm at a healthy weight and have maintained a 120-pound weight loss for over nine years. I'm free of food obsession, one day at a time. I have a new career that's interesting and fun. I have a nice place to live and I'm stable. Before recovery, I moved often, seeking an outer fix for my inner problem. I've now lived in the same place for 11 years. The biggest change is my desire to be of service to others – with work, family, neighbors, my animals, and my community. I get to help other compulsive overeaters find the solution that I found.

The program of recovery has affected many other people in my life, because I've taken my better personality into those interactions and relationships.

This life is so different than the one I was living, and infinitely better.

Jo M.