

Writing Exercise – Nov 2013 Assembly - Abstinence

Q1 – There is more to a plan of eating than just what you eat: where, when, how much, with whom, sitting or standing, how fast/slow you eat, the kind of place setting (dishes, silverware, table cloth, etc.), the kind and volume of music, whether you read, listen to the radio, text, or watch TV while you eat, etc. What choices help you stay abstinent?

RESPONSES

Sitting at the table – no “on the move” eating; part of my addiction was “inhaling” my food so I choose to eat slowly, putting my fork down; I need to share and not hoard food, so I never hid food anymore...even stuff I want to be sure is there for my abstinent meals.

Sitting; eating my food with no distractions makes me aware of what I am eating and it makes it more satisfying; eating slowly helps with digestion and satisfaction.

I needed to abstain from TV for a number of years since I used to binge while watching. Now I try to be mindful while eating, though a busy lifestyle makes it difficult.

So simple, just not easy. Answer – all of the above.

I need to look at my food choices - those foods that I was allergic to. I also had to look at food behaviors – if my brain does register that I ate. If I am not mindful, then I have a tendency to over consume or justify the volume of food I eat. By acknowledging both the foods that trigger the compulsion and the behaviors that lead me to overeat and praying for God to show me and help me, I have been able to stay abstinent.

I do not taste as I cook (I have ‘tasters’ in my home if necessary). If I know I’m going to have a meal/meals in restaurants (like on vacation), my day of food is more planned. I do read during meals but rarely eat in front of TV. I have no fear of eating by myself. Breakfast is fairly set; the rest of the day is open to ability to change.

I made a commitment to 3 meals a day at my 1st OA meeting without reservation. I choose to forego rationalizations and excuses to justify eating. I have been abstinent for 26 years.

Serving myself in the kitchen and taking my plate to the dining room table. How fast I eat is still a problem for me (some of which comes from ½ hour lunches which needed to include a bathroom break and some downtime – R&R).

Each morning thanking HP for the hours of abstinence while sleeping (I don’t have to ask for 24 hours as I already have 8! ☺) Using my nice place settings instead of “fast”.

Sitting down to eat – no standing up! Placemat on the table then off the table when the meal is done. Staying out of the kitchen after the dishes are done. Packing 5 salads on Sunday – one for each lunch on work/weekdays. Putting oil & vinegar in 5 – 4oz. bottles to take each day. One plate of protein and veggies.

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I read while I eat. I don't listen to music. I connect with God by praying before I eat and after, thanking God for an abstinent meal.

I try to avoid eating in my car, while cooking, when mad or frustrated.

I am an emotional eater – what helps me to stay abstinent is making the choice to feel my feelings. I have to be willing to be uncomfortable. In the past I needed to do something – eat – so that I wouldn't feel.

Reducing the amount of preparation time for a meal; planning for variations to accommodate distance running activity with the help of a sports nutritionist; not eating as part of a working lunch as much as possible.

I don't eat in the car when going inside or to a table is an option. (Occasionally I allow it if I need to get to my OA meeting on time.) I don't eat during meal prep or cleanup. I avoid eating standing up. Before I eat an unmeasured meal, I pray "God, thank you for this food and thank you that I don't have to eat too much of it."

Standing up most of the time – am on the go to do things. Or watching TV for the time it takes me to eat.

I make an effort to keep foods in my house from which I can make an appropriate abstinent meal. I may not have all my meals totally planned out, but I am careful, when I write out my grocery list to plan to buy appropriate foods. I frequently make large quantities of soups (especially in winter) and pack them up in meal portions to eat/freeze.

I usually watch the news. No music, no reading. My meals are very simple and approximately the same every day. I use the "keep it simple" and "repetition is the only form of permanence nature can achieve" as my guiding principles.

Do what my sponsor did (without arguing or questioning) and trust – she had what I wanted. So I did what I was told. I met with a dietitian and asked for a food plan for losing weight. I write my food commitments down. I tell my sponsor my food commitments in weighed and measured amounts. I eat what I committed to and I don't eat my trigger foods (sugar, flour, etc.)

My plan of eating has evolved since I was diagnosed with Type II diabetes in 2009. Then I began weighing and measuring my food, after seeing a nutritionist. I am allowed 130 grams of carbs a day. Then in 2012 I was diagnosed with 3rd stage kidney disease due to high blood pressure. So my guidelines are for 5-7 oz of animal protein a day. This has involved some more adjustment, however, once I accepted it I became comfortable. I frequently watch TC while eating. At one time I read at the table but since I am a compulsive reader the food would disappear untasted or unappreciated.

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The first most important thing for me is planning, and weighing and measuring my food when I am home. When I go out I ask for a box and cut my protein portion in half. I like eating without the TV on, having a meal (sit down) with my husband, especially if we have gone different ways that day. Although I have had occasions where I have to eat on the run, I always prepare my food to take back-up food with me.

Eating at specific times only – breakfast between 6-8AM, lunch between 11:30-1PM, dinner between 5-7PM, bedtime snack 10PM. I can't watch TV and eat. The TC triggers me to eat mindlessly or when it is not mealtime. TV watching is one of my compulsive behaviors than can trigger me to eat.

3-0-1 eating plan; abstaining from trigger foods; identifying and NOT DOING behaviors that make me eat compulsively; committing to service; talking daily with my sponsor and listening to her.

Q2 - How do you use writing to help you stay abstinent?

RESPONSES

I plan my food out; I write down amounts; I send that in an email accountability daily; I write my 10th step daily and do an 11th step which helps me get my resentments and fears on paper rather than eating over them.

I used to say I was bad at writing, which wasn't actually true. I just didn't use it often. Now writing is my go-to tool for coping with strong feelings of anger or sadness.

Every morning or the night before I write out my plan – where to eat, what to eat, when to eat, who do I call today. Specific responsibilities or chosen actions get the same thought – what, where, who, when. Be specific.

I use writing to do my 10th step. Whenever I am concerned or upset I feel like I want to eat. If I write my concerns, fears or resentments, I share with my sponsor. Then I can look at my part, use the serenity prayer and ask God for help to abstain.

I do write my food 90% of the time. It keeps me aware of what I consume in a day. I also make commitments regarding the food for the day in an action plan as necessary.

I don't.

Writing helps by getting feelings down on paper. It is not so much as what I am eating but what is eating me.

It is more difficult as I have trouble holding a pen.

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Use a 2-way prayer small notebook in which I wrote every day. Tell God what issues I am giving to Him. Expecting Him to happily take them and solve them for me. Surrendering all changes in me to Him – my ‘changer’ is broken – He changes me, my food plan, my worries, etc.

I don't use writing to stay abstinent from food but to stay abstinent from anger, bitterness, resentment.

I like to write as often as I can, when things are bottling up inside of me, when feelings seem overwhelming. It gives form to what is going on inside me so that I may better give it to God.

The only place I'm 100% honest is when I'm writing about my feelings and my food.

Do a 10th step when there is a resentment, fear, or guilt that arises within minutes, hours of it occurring. Have a written base plan of eating with amounts and specific, regular time of day. Have a written list of trigger foods.

I'm currently sending my For Today daily workbook answers to my sponsor, sponsees and some other OA friends. This keeps my head in program.

Not very much.

I write in the morning and evening and write my food down every day. Writing helps my emotional sobriety. It is something I have done daily for a very long time. I can't live abstinely without it.

Only when in dire, dire emotional crisis do I pick up the 6 lb. pencil/pen to write. Having recently experienced once such crisis and deciding to write about it (at the suggestion of my sponsor), the relief was enormous. So I can applaud those who do journal regularly. I am keeping a sporadic diary now about the same crisis and find it greatly beneficial.

Writing has been an important tool to help me focus on my plan of eating and action plan. I also write daily in the "For Today" workbook and answer questions. I use writing when things are painful and unacceptable as a tool to release my fear and anger. This too helps me put things in perspective and is something I can share with my sponsor.

Writing helps me get in touch with my Higher Power. It is part of prayer and meditation (Step 11). Journaling also helps me put limits on my problems.

I am not a faithful journaler, so once a month I write a fresh lead and compare it with those I've written in the past to see changes that have happened and changes that need to. I write for OA newsletters and work on the World Service Literature Committee, which keeps me writing regularly. I work in my 12 Step Workbook and compare with my earlier writings.