Pages 9-11 of Step 2 in the OA 12x12 Book

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

Many of us compulsive eaters tend to look at this step and say: "Restore me to sanity? I don't need that. I'm perfectly sane. I just have an eating problem." But how sane are we, really?

When we look with complete honesty at our lives, we see that where eating is concerned, we have acted in an extremely irrational and self-destructive manner. Under the compulsion to eat, many of us have done things no sane person would think of doing. We have driven miles in the dead of night to satisfy a craving for food. We have eaten food that was frozen, burnt, stale, or even dangerously spoiled. We have eaten food off other people's plates, off the floor, off the ground. We have dug food out of the garbage and eaten it.

We have frequently lied about what we have eaten – lied to others because we didn't want to face the truth ourselves. We have stolen food from our friends, family and employers, as well as from the grocery store. We have also stolen money to buy food. We have eaten beyond the point of being full, beyond the point of being sick of eating. We have continued to overeat, knowing all the while we were destroying our health. We have isolated ourselves to eat, damaging our relationships and denying ourselves a full social life.

Then, horrified by what we were doing to ourselves with food, we became obsessed with diets. We spent hundreds of dollars on weight-loss schemes, we bought all sorts of appetite-control drugs, we joined diet clubs and spas, we had ourselves hypnotized and analyzed, we had major surgery on our digestive systems, we had our ears stapled or our jaws wired shut. All of this we did willingly, hoping we could someday "have our cake and eat it too."

Some of us went from doctor to doctor looking for a cure. The doctors gave us diets, but we had no better success with those than with the other diets we'd been on. The doctors gave us shots and pills. Those worked for a while, but we inevitably lost control and overate again, putting back on the weight we had worked so hard to lose.

(over)

Many of us tried fasting, with and without a doctor's supervision. Usually we lost weight, but as soon as we started eating again, the compulsive eating behavior returned, along with the weight. Some of us learned to purge ourselves with vomiting, laxatives, or excessive exercise. We'd stuff food in our mouths until we were in physical pain, then we'd "get rid of it." We damaged our digestive systems and our teeth while we starved our bodies of nutrients needed to live.

We found that no matter what we did to ease our turmoil, our compulsive eating eventually returned. Over the long haul, our weight went up and our self-esteem went down. After a while we became battle-weary and discouraged. Still we could never accept our powerlessness.

We took comfort in a feeling that everything was all right as long as we got enough to eat. The only trouble was that as our compulsive eating progressed it became harder for us to get enough. Instead of bringing comfort, the eating backfired. The more we ate the more we suffered, yet we continued to eat. Our true insanity could be seen in the fact that we kept right on trying to find comfort in excess food, long after it began to cause us misery.

Once we honestly looked at our lives, it became easy for us to admit we had acted insanely where food and weight were concerned.

(Updated 2-10-2020)