



STEP 12 MAGAZINE™

Carrying A Message of Hope in Recovery

Finding Gratitude



Gratitude Is Everything

by Lori Nelson

Tips & Myths For Exercising Your Recovery

by Batista Gremaud

It Shouldn't Hurt To Be A Child

by Carol Teitelbaum, MFT

Flakka - Designer Drug Alert

*by Mendi Baron, LCSW
The Teen Corner*

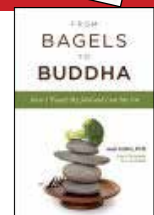
INSIDE:

- * Horoscopes
- * Puzzles
- * Recovery Resources
- * Humor Page
- * Newcomer's Page



Dr. Judi Hollis

Experience, Strength, and Hope For People Struggling with Food Obsession



The Importance of Accountability In Early and Long-Term Recovery

For overeaters, just as with alcoholics and/or addicts, early recovery focus is about getting the substance in order. That process may involve a lot of slipping and sliding – one day on, one day off; three days on, 2 days off. The desire to stop the destructive pattern is the only requirement for membership, and the cornerstone to early recovery.

There are people who have been in recovery long-term and have stayed abstinent since day one from whatever their substance is (sugar, refined carbs, etc.) and remain that way sometimes 20-30 years later. Some of these people, while being true to their food-plans and their abstinence, have gained weight -- possibly consuming more fats and denser proteins in larger quantities. This indicates that there is more to recovering from food obsession than simply counting days, or counting sugars.

Whether in early recovery or after years of practicing the principles of this life-saving program, one thing remains consistent – we need to be accountable to ourselves and to another fellow sufferer. Trusting our own inner voice doesn't work when it comes to obsession. The inner voice is masterful at denial and rationalization. We need objective, caring, judgment-free people who will listen to what we plan to put in our mouths and afterwards how well we follow those plans.

Even when we write everything down – we are only being accountable to our sneaky-selves. A sponsor, therapist, fellow sufferer has the gift of objectivity. There is no emotional rationalizing, no deeper driving force evaluating and assessing our eating patterns. These accountability partners also do double-duty as reminders when we conveniently forget that we slipped up with some cheesecake two days before ravaging through the grocery store aisles with “all consuming” cravings. Sometimes our bodies don't respond immediately. Just as we don't lose a pound at the end of a meticulous day of following our “diet,” we don't usually experience the trigger of “craving” at the end of a flexible day eating sugars.

In order for a sponsor to be privy to the slips and stumbles we may encounter on our journey, there must be a sense of safety. Full disclosure of our eating patterns is terrifying. We would almost rather

talk about our sex lives than the extra helping of mashed potatoes (with butter and gravy) we had at Christmas. Therefore, choosing a sponsor who can be judgment-free is extremely important to the success of our recovery. If we don't feel safe, we will lie. If we lie, we are right back to trusting our own inner sneaks. And we crumble.

As we get older, our metabolisms slow down. Our focus moves more into the area of wanting healthier functioning bodies and less on controlling the food obsession. There are people who may start putting on weight as a result of their slower metabolisms – even when their food plans have not changed. Many longer-term recovering Overeaters start to revisit a “dieting” strategy to control their weight. Die-die-diet is a word that overeaters shy away from, but on a temporary basis diets work. When I notice my weight getting to a certain number, I have the tools in place to incorporate flexibility in my food plan that will keep that weight in check – and keep my body functioning. I share my diet goals, the details, and the results with my sponsor.

After 40 years of being mindful of my recovery, my weight, my consumption – I am fine deviating from the early diligence of my food plan from time to time. I pay close attention to my body and adjust my program accordingly. Flexibility with my food-plan and with my physical activity and emotional well-being are all key factors in maintaining health in mind-body-spirit. After 40 years of being mindful of my recovery, I still rely on the insight and objectivity of a sponsor.

Successful recovery from overeating or food obsession needs to be very individualized. Each person must have the flexibility and accountability to find a recovery plan that works in their life. Flexibility without accountability is a recipe for disaster. Accountability without flexibility is a recipe for desert.

by Karen VanDenBerg based on interview with Judi Hollis on May 20, 2015

(c) 2015. Dr. Judi Hollis is a Licensed Family Therapist, author of several books and educational materials, motivational speaker, radio and television expert. Judi would love to hear from you! You can ask Judi questions and access her materials, at www.judihollis.com or call 1-800-8-ENOUGH

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