

Exiting the vicious circle

I had been struggling with my weight and hideous food behaviors for as long as I can remember. My weight didn't fluctuate, I just simply couldn't lose the excess pounds no matter what I did. The compulsive food behaviors brought me more shame than I care to recall. For instance, finding candy in my sock drawer in front of a friend because I had hidden them there, or being caught in the act of taking food that was meant for someone else.

I knew (or thought I knew) that my compulsive overeating was due to emotional reasons. I had the biography to prove it. So, throughout my life I did lots and lots of therapy. I tried the entire spectrum, from cognitive behavior therapy to a more psychodynamic approach and everything in between. All this work was really helpful for other areas of my life, like dealing with trauma, self-esteem issues, or having meaningful relationships. However, my uncontrolled eating remained mostly unchanged. My therapists said that I either "haven't found the real reason for my bingeing yet", or "haven't developed the right skills yet" (depending on their approach). However, these explanations were starting to sound like empty promises. I had developed pretty good life skills in the meantime and my trauma did feel like it was well integrated. So why the hell wasn't the food stuff getting better? At the end of the day, I had to be honest enough to myself to see that I ate because I had the urge to eat. It didn't matter if I was happy or sad, the urge to eat was always there. Also, I had become quite isolated throughout my addiction. This was not something I felt comfortable sharing, and even if I did, people often did not take me seriously (not even health care professionals!).

Ultimately, I began looking elsewhere for answers. I looked into the effects different foods had on my body and stumbled on to OA. I grew up in the low fat high carb era, so daring to question that dogma felt like heresy at times. After reading piles of research and experimenting with food, I finally found a food plan that works for me. Which means, I no longer have the urge to eat all the time and I was able to shed most of my unwanted extra pounds. Shortly afterwards I joined OA and was able to experience how unbelievably beneficial community support is. In the rooms I heard phrases like "connection is the counterforce to addiction" and I wholeheartedly agree with that. It's so important to have people in my life that get me and support me. That crucial part was missing until now. Addiction is complex and the solution for me consists of three parts: biology, psychology, and sociology. For me personally, I don't think I would enjoy the recovery I have today without OA.

- Karolina