

Road to Recovery

I have a long history of struggling with my weight and my food behaviors. As an adult my weight has wavered between 118 and 290. I am now hovering around 170 still hoping to lose another 40 pounds to preserve my titanium knees as long as I live. I joined Secular OA at the beginning of the pandemic when I stumbled on a meeting that approached recovery from a secular perspective which was a path that made sense to me.

I have experienced a lot of recovery. For me, it is a series of small behavioral changes that have allowed me to stop compulsively overeating in very specific situations. When I joined Secular, I was triggered by specific fast food restaurants. My sons live 2 hours from me along a highway that was punctuated with many high-quality fast-food stops. There were many times I arrived at my son's house sick and disgusted with myself because I had stopped 6 times to indulge. And even then, I went out for a meal with him.

In one of the first meetings that I attended; I heard a fellow describe "Book Ending" as a way to stay abstinent under pressure. I did not have a sponsor and although I felt comfortable attending meetings, I was too humiliated to ask for help. I was afraid that I would be a bother to the people I called. With my truck loaded and ready to go, I called the fellow who described book-ending from my parking space...secretly hoping they would not answer...but they answered immediately.

I told them that I was beginning a 2 hour trip that contained lots of restaurants that were triggers for me and that I wanted to try book-ending. They were almost excited. I was so surprised. They asked me what the first temptation was and encouraged me to call when I got close. Five minutes before I drove by the first place I pulled over and called. The encouragement was wonderful. They told me of the freedom they felt when they were able to avoid temptation and told me to call when I passed the first place and tell them the next temptation.

I made 8 calls that day and arrived at my son's house ready for a nice lunch instead of stuffed with food and self-loathing. What is amazing is that now, 2 years later, I make that trip a couple of times a month and I don't even notice the signs for my previous downfalls. I have this little piece of recovery and freedom even as I work on other behaviors.

It's odd that I am sometimes able to make a change because I have committed to someone I barely know when I am unable to make the change when I commit to myself. I can be overly analytical but this type of "faith in something greater than myself" does not lend itself to analysis. It is the gift of this program, and it is not necessary to know why it works. And it is the gift of freedom.

- Anonymous