



# THE ABSTINENT TIMES

## Food Addicts Anonymous

[www.faacanhelp.org](http://www.faacanhelp.org)

World Service Office (WSO)  
529 N W Prima Vista Blvd.  
#301A Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
Email: [faawso@faacanhelp.org](mailto:faawso@faacanhelp.org)

JUST FOR TODAY - I will be grateful. I can change my attitude simply by realizing that not everyone who suffers from my addiction has been given a chance for recovery in this program. Think of family members or close friends who suffer unknowingly from the results of their food addiction. When everything else looks hopeless, I will remember how much more difficult and out of control I was while active food addiction was an every day occurrence. continued on Page 7

From *JUST FOR TODAY Bookmark, No. 8*

## Share your ESH (Experience, Strength, & Hope) with THE ABSTINENT TIMES

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To submit original poems or articles based on your ESH for Steps, Traditions, or Recovery Before and After:  
[FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com)

**Food Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who are willing to recover from the disease of food addiction. Sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others allows us to recover from this disease One Day at a Time.**



### PHYSICALLY BEFORE

I was an overweight diabetic with arthritic issues struggling to climb stairs and refusing to surrender to recommended dietary changes. I was nine pounds shy of qualifying for weight loss surgery. My doctor advised against such measures indicating I may begin to look better on the outside, but she was very concerned with how to treat my internal organs, which she thought may go into shock based on my current health challenges. My cholesterol was elevated and the swelling in my ankles was quite

intense. I kept asking for pills thinking there was a magic pill to manage my health challenges and I tried diets for the weight.

My dieting career began in 1997 at the age of thirty-four. I deemed the dieting period a career because it lasted just beyond twenty years. Needless to say, the dieting measures resulted in a seventy-two-pound weight gain until I entered recovery in 2017 at 241 pounds. My 5'3" frame was almost as wide as it was tall, and I was physically miserable.

### PHYSICALLY AFTER

Today, June 2023, after almost six years in FAA, I am no longer a diabetic. My cholesterol levels are in a normal range. My arthritis issues are not a problem. I am a bit shorter, 5'2" in a healthy weight range of 130-135 pounds. I can not only climb stairs but often find myself preferring to walk up one flight and down two. My doctors are amazed at my transition. I owe it all to this program and the leadership and guidance I received from my sponsor. My daily walking routine, which began shortly after I joined the program, includes walking at least thirty minutes per day. My thighs no longer rub together. Incidentally, even after the weight loss I suffered with severe swelling of my ankles. Thankfully the program taught me to practice self-care, so when it was recommended, I sought vascular care, I readily complied. During this consultation we discovered I had an underlying health condition that required immediate medical attention. There I was too ashamed to talk about my swelling ankles thinking it was all due to my weight only to learn I had a serious medical condition. Needless to say, I am now outfitted with stents and blood flow is mighty fine. I am indeed a walking miracle of what this FAA program can, and will do, for those who choose to follow it.

### EMOTIONALLY BEFORE

I lived with a host of shame, regret, self-doubt, and self-hatred toward myself. Yet, I used everything in my power to not allow these feelings to be known. I truly felt isolated in a room filled with people, even if these people were my own family. I was lost, confused, and totally beaten by this disease. I wore a mask, adapting myself into whatever environment I landed. I constantly compared my inside to other people's outside. It never occurred to me they could be wearing masks as well. I battled with a lack of self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, and self-love.

Continued on page 3

### **EMOTIONALLY AFTER** Continued from page 2

What a difference abstinence and clarity have brought to my life. At last, I am free. I am free to be me — the only person I was meant to be. To think for fifty years, I denied the world of my existence because I wanted to be everyone else yet not truly knowing who I was. This program taught me self-acceptance which has enabled me to accept others. I, like you, am my own unique snowflake. No one was supposed to be me, but me. I am a spiritual being having a human experience. Uniquely designed by my Creator and I tried for years to deny the world His creation. I was never meant to be like any of the people I compared myself to. And then with all the shame and worthlessness I carried around, this program allowed me to let these feelings go, once you taught me that I was afflicted with a biochemical disorder and it was not my fault; I was born this way. I cannot change it, nor can I change anything about my past. Instead, I can commit to self-forgiveness and not allow the past to define me. It's behind me. Today, thanks to FAA, my God, my sponsor, and this family ship, I am practicing self-love. Still work to be done in this area but I know I am on the right path, as I move forward, with love, freedom, and a happy, useful life.

### **SPIRITUALLY BEFORE**

I came into program as an active practicing Catholic. I marched through this thing called life, believing in a God, who I thought was keeping a very watchful eye on my bad behaviors — dishonesty, infidelity, self-seeking. There I was asking God to co-sign on my will, which was often times selfish and self-centered. When God did not answer my pleas, I knew it was because of my behavior. I would do bad; go to confession; say a few prayers and beg for forgiveness. What I learned in recovery though was what I said I believed and how I acted and/or reacted were not in alignment. I kept repeating this behavior over and over again. Even when I corrected my infidelity tendencies and stopped lying by omission life was still not good for me...until I worked the steps with my sponsor.

### **SPIRITUALLY AFTER**

In Step Two in our FAA literature it states, “we must believe God is loving, accepting and healing.” My sponsor kindly pointed out to me that it appeared to her that this was not what I believed based on my actions. She reminded me I needed a Higher Power or God who was loving, accepting, and healing, or otherwise this program may not work for me. I had been practicing a religious relationship with a God that seriously lacked this belief. I needed a spiritual connection. Who knew? Today, although I am still practicing in my faith, I not only believe God is loving, accepting, and healing. I have the added benefit of KNOWING, God is loving, accepting, and healing. My spiritual connection with God, taught to me by this FAA program far exceeds anything I have ever encountered. Today, I am blessed to know God will answer my prayers, either right away as asked, later when I am equipped to handle things, or He has a whole new better solution to my troubles. The more I ask, the more I believe, the more I receive. God was not meant for me to explain. God is an experience I am honored to enjoy. God is truly doing for me what I could not do for myself. I am truly blessed.



**Dear Abstinent Annie, Why is it important to follow food plan as it is written? Why isn't it enough to just be SFW free? Wondering Willow**



Dear Wondering Willow, why it is important to follow the plan as written can be found in our literature.

The Guidelines to Abstinence, **Food Addicts Anonymous**, page 271, paragraph 3 states, *“one of the obstacles you may encounter in early recovery is the temptation to alter the food plan to suit yourself. It is our experience that deviations recreate our old food problems.* I had this experience in 2016 when I wanted to deviate to suit my needs. The time parameters between meals did not work for me. But newsflash my plan was not working either. So, I surrendered to the times.

*And then #1 states “Weigh and measure food as specified. Volume can trigger the disease. Eating larger or smaller quantities of food than recommended on the plan can cause physical cravings to reappear and can lead us back into the disease of food addiction. Eating added volume or restricting is often the beginning of the relapse process.”* This caught my attention very quickly at the beginning of my program of recovery. I knew the pain of resisting so I certainly did not want to set myself up for failure, so I followed the plan. It took away the cravings and kept me out of relapse.

I was a diabetic on medicine when I entered program, today, thank you FAA, I am no longer a diabetic. In fact, my last A1C reading was 4.2 ...unbelievable. Maybe not. Because in the green book it states, again in the guidelines to abstinence chapter 8, midway through page 273: *“1. Following the FAA food plan as written will allow you to become well physically, mentally, and spiritually. The FAA food plan balances proteins and carbohydrates to support steady, stable blood sugar levels and a steady metabolism—essential to prevent triggering cravings and binges. The recommended time between meals further supports this. **DO NOT SKIP MEALS!**”* Based on my experience, I continue to weigh and measure and eat my meals on time. And prayerfully, my diabetes will be arrested as my food addiction has been one day at a time.

And then, finally on page 277, in the paragraph below **CONDIMENTS**, the second paragraph states, *“This initial food plan has been the most successful for our members to obtain abstinence, enabling them to begin to have clear thinking. Eating the prescribed food plan also offers us a chance to heal our organs and learn the basic fundamentals of eating healthy. To maintain abstinence, an open mind will be required while our bodies heal and our needs change. The most important aspect of maintaining abstinence is to totally eliminate sugar, flour, and wheat from our daily lives.”*

So, for me, in the beginning I followed the plan as written. My distorted thinking was right-sized. The plan totally eliminated my cravings and began my process of healing.

Why isn't it enough to just be SFW free? For me, there are a number of foods out here that I enjoyed, which are sugar, flour and wheat free. I could binge on these foods and still be stuck in my disease. This disease is not about just being abstinent from SFW. It is about my behavior with food that causes me immense pain and my health to deteriorate because of this behavior. Today, I am healthy. I have a healthy relationship with food, eating weighed and measured meals, on time, abstaining from those my body cannot process. My food is coordinated with my sponsor and my doctor. I am truly grateful. I have much thanks to FAA for saving and extending my life. All the best for your recovery, Abstinent Annie.

**Abstinent Annie is not a professional therapist. This person is simply another food addict who is passionate about FAA and has many years of abstinence, One Day at a Time.**

**FAA does not guarantee recovery from diabetes or any other medical condition.**

# Change of Heart

## The Miracle of Steps 6, 7, 8 & 9

In Step 6, I had become ready to have God remove the self-centered fear that I had identified as the underlying character defect infecting my spiritual nature. I was angry because I was afraid. And the fear came from relying on myself instead of turning to God for help. In Step 7, I humbly asked God to remove my shortcomings. I had the list of the "deadly sins" from our literature and included a list of their corresponding "lively virtues" I'd be aiming for with God's help. I wrote a formal prayer asking God to remove all shortcomings, and I read it aloud with my sponsor as witness.

Step 8: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all." How had fear harmed those around me? It caused me to make irrational, impulsive decisions that produced insecurity in the people around me who could not trust me to be stable, consistent, and reliable, especially as a parent. I didn't realize that when our actions are fear-based, it's emotionally corrosive to others, and when we're trusting, it builds faith in ourselves and security in those around us. I had a list of names, but I believe God held the agenda, the way the amends would be made, their wording, and their timing. I didn't do anything on my own without sponsor feedback and guidance. God started with those people closest to me, my daughters as a single mom.

Step 9. "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." With this conscious reliance on God to heal my selfish heart, I lived my way into amends to my daughters.

They included no contact with a former partner, creating secure and stable living and employment situations, direct apologies for the mistakes I'd made that upset their lives and maintaining continuous abstinence to amend the chronic relapsing. I made amends to their father, who would no longer need to run damage control on me.

This was just a start. I was well on my way to this new way of life we talk about, not just free from active food addiction but from slave-driven fearful thinking and acting. So that's what freedom from bondage of self means! My thoughts could now emanate from a loving, trusting place in my heart where God resides and guides. Now I trust God with all my heart, and when fear arises, I turn to God to remove it.



**Calling All Conventioneers!**  
**Share a 2023 FAA annual convention experience from September 8-10, in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, in 50 words or less. Tell us about a miracle, a moment or a memory! Send it to [FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com) by October 1.**

## **Before I Begin My Day**

by Member of Fellowship

**Before I begin my day,**

**I know I need to pray.**

**Thank G-d for restoring my pure  
soul,**

**Then my body and soul feel whole.**

**Thank G-d for a good night's  
sleep.**

**Thank G-d I didn't oversleep.**

**Thank G-d for the gift of life,  
And a day not filled with strife.**

**Before I begin my day,**

**I check my inventory of the  
previous day,**

**Do I need to make amends**

**to any of my family, coworkers, or  
friends?**

**Before I begin my day,**

**I take steps one, two and three,**

**Said with all humility,**

**I can't, You can, I'll let You.**

**Before I begin my day,**

**I make an action plan, so I am not  
led astray.**

**Before I begin my day,**

**I ask G-d to be beside me in all my  
ways.**

**That attitude of gratitude goes a  
long, long way.**

**I know that starting my day with a  
clean slate,**

**Will make the rest of the day just  
great!**



## Just for Today #8

**Just for today - I will be grateful. I can change my attitude simply by realizing that not everyone who suffers from my addiction has been given a chance for recovery in this program. Think of family members or close friends who suffer unknowingly from the results of their food addiction. When everything else looks hopeless, I will remember how much more difficult and out of control I was while active food addiction was an everyday occurrence. I am involved in the process of creating a new life with the help of my Higher Power and my new friends. I am grateful.**

I am grateful to learn I wasn't alone.

I am grateful to know it wasn't my fault.

I am grateful to know that my inability to stop eating was a biochemical addiction to sugar, flour, and wheat.

I am grateful for the other food addicts that were in the room of the first face to face meeting I attended.

I am grateful for their knowledge they so freely shared with me.

I am grateful for the food plan and the relief of the obsession with the next sugar, flour or wheat "fix" I will put into my mouth.

I am grateful to have relationships with the workers in the produce section at the grocery store, instead of the candy in the checkout line.

I am grateful for the FAA literature, specifically written for me and my addiction to sugar, wheat and flour.

I am grateful for my fellow addicts who support me through the ups and downs of daily living.

I am grateful to learn the meaning of the word "surrender" and the word "acceptance" and the peace they offer.

I am grateful to have been gently encouraged "to act as if I believed in a HP", and in time finding a HP that is loving, forgiving, accepting, and healing.



I am grateful to believe in the power of prayer.

I am grateful to have learned to ask my HP to walk with me every day.

I am grateful for the desperate late night phone calls that were answered.

I am grateful for one day at a time abstinence.

I am grateful to know that the simplest prayer is the words "Help me".

I am grateful to learn that no one, including me is perfect.

I am grateful for self-acceptance, and learning to be compassionate towards myself, and others.

I am grateful for the everyday work of recovery which keeps me from going back to the insanity and chaos of my life as an active food addict.

I am grateful that my car is no longer full of hidden food wrappers and random fossilized french fries.

I am grateful for the guidance and love of my sponsor.

I am grateful for all that I learn from my sponsees.

I am grateful for my new way of life that working the 12 steps made possible.

I am grateful to be alive and look forward to a new day with hope and optimism.

529 NW Prima Vista Blvd. #301A  
Port St Lucie, FL 34983

For today, I seek to love, comfort, and  
understand others.

From FFTS, June 15th

