

Spring 2024



THE ABSTINENT TIMES

Food Addicts Anonymous

www.faacanhelp.org

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JUST FOR TODAY – I will feel my fear and do it anyway. I will trust my Higher Power is with me each moment of the day. I can ask for help, take a deep breath and trust that I will not be given more than I can handle. With help from my support system and my God, I will grow with each experience.

From *JUST FOR TODAY* Bookmark, No. 9

For today, I remember that what I can feel I can heal.

From *Food for the Soul*, page 357

HP Want Ad, Step 2, Page 2

I was born into a thin family, Page 3

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Prayer, Page 8

To submit original poems or articles based on your ESH for Steps, Traditions, or Recovery Before and After:
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.

Description of Higher Power Wanted

From FAA's The Steps for Recovery Workbook, Step Two, page 10: "We must begin to believe there is a Power greater than ourselves and that whatever our concept of a Higher Power is, it can help us. We may all have a different concept of a Higher Power, but it is important that we have some concepts that are the same. We must believe that God is loving, accepting and healing."

WANTED: A compassionate and loving spiritual partner and guide. Experience and wisdom with past trauma and an innate sense of insight into human frailties are appreciated.

Good listening skills are paramount, and guidance is appreciated, but our partnership will mean I am not looking for You to "fix" me. Sometimes You will just be required to be a kind witness to my confusion and sorrow.

While also providing loving support, You will be expected to speak your mind and provide honest and loving feedback. To show up in my blind spots, and to meet my resistance and self-justifications with firmness and resolve with the ultimate goal of securing my freedom.

Your compassion and deep understanding of the 12 steps will be key to guiding us both on this lifelong journey.

For my part, I will commit to being open and honest with you. I will admit my shortcomings and fears. Once you start in this position, I will not undermine you and try to run the show. I will also listen for guidance and insight. When I don't do these things, I will promptly admit it and share the details of my defects. I commit to having a beginner's mindset and not become jaded or resigned. I commit to meeting each new insight with openness and a commitment to healing.

Must be open to meeting at off hours for morning prayer and nightly reflection.

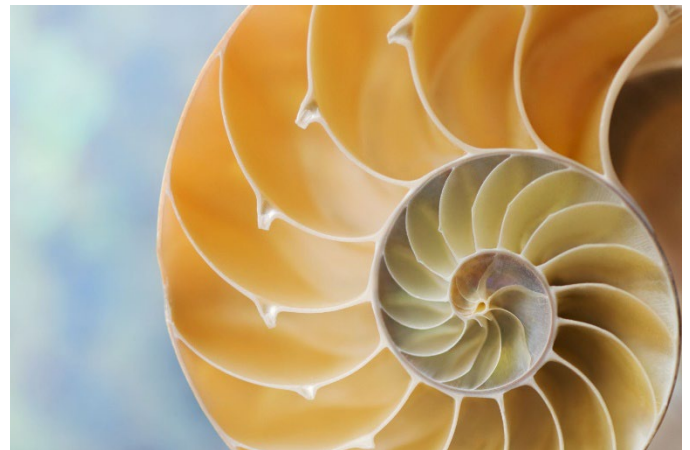
Above all, this position requires unconditional love and the qualities of an "old soul".

I am aware of the difficulty and commitment required by this position and that the qualifications are unique. Therefore, the salary is: priceless, and the position starts immediately.

WANTED: A Higher Power who is not one of many, but is THE One and Only, whose power supersedes all others-lesser powers need not apply. This Higher Power must know me intimately and completely-how I'm designed, what my purpose is, what my past, present and future holds-as if He had created me himself. He must be available 24/7, 365, because I never know when I'm going to need Him. He must be wise, loving, forgiving, full of grace, mercy and truth, because I mess up a lot and don't really know as much as I think I do. **He must also know how to teach me limits and boundaries because not everything I come up with is for my good or the good of others.** He must be a patient and forgiving teacher, able to use my mistakes to teach me maturity, wisdom, and regard for others. And He must be comforting and encouraging, as I tend to get depressed and want to give up too easily.

It would be helpful if He could supply a written text concerning his background and leadership style.

We expect that this will be a once-in-a-lifetime hire, so only those with eternal faithfulness are encouraged to apply.



I WAS BORN INTO A THIN FAMILY

“Body Image” has always been important to me. I was born into a thin family without known addictions. I have three beautiful sisters who were thin most of their lives. My mother was beautiful and loved clothes. She always looked like a million dollars.

My dad maintained an ideal weight of 175. But by 10 years old, I was overweight. I wondered why I was the exception. Most of my life I weighed more than my dad.

My dad was a published writer. One memory I have of him is that of him sitting in his green chair at his desk writing. After he passed, I was given his green chair. Unfortunately, I was too big to sit in it. He never said anything, but it must have pained him to see me struggling with my weight and body image.

I have been on every diet out there and I would lose weight only to gain it back. At the late age of 75, I have found a program that finally worked for me – that program is called FAA (Food Addicts Anonymous).

If only I had discovered it in 1987, when it began.... but I have proven it is never too late. In the past year, I have lost 90 pounds, reduced my blood pressure, and reversed my diabetes. I am no longer on medicine for blood pressure or diabetes. The only drug that I take is one for cancer, because I have had cancer three times.

My doctors, family and friends are so proud of me. I feel and look 20 years younger. I'm sure that I owe it all to FAA. It has been the only program that makes complete sense to me.

I can now sit in my dad's green chair without a problem. If only my parents could see me today. I am proud of how I look and feel for the

first time in many years. My body image is no longer a problem. I love myself the way I am today.



Open F2F Meetings

All are Welcome to attend

The **SECOND MONDAY** of every month
12:30 PM to 1:30 PM, Pacific Time
425 S. Broadway
Los Angeles, CA
Peace Room

The **SECOND MONDAY** of every month
10:30 AM to 11:30 AM, Pacific Time
Kaiser Permanente (Los Angeles) Main
Street Pavilion, Bldg 2 Group Room B
23621 Main St.
Carson, CA 90745

EVERY FRIDAY
4 PM to 5 PM, Pacific Time Goodwin's
Market Patio
26000 W. Lugonia Ave Redlands, CA

Ask Abstinent Annie

Dear Annie,

I have a good friend who has tried her whole life to lose weight. She has recently found FAA and she's been losing weight. But I'm worried for her because one of the FAA suggestions is to only weigh herself once a month, but she is obsessed with stepping on the scale every day (or several times in one day) to see if it's "working" or not. It's all she can think about. What can help her let go of the constant need to measure her "success?" It's like she has traded one kind of craziness (in the food) for another kind of craziness (obsession with changes in her weight).

Signed – A Worried Friend

Dear Worried,

This is a common problem for food addicts who have spent a lifetime repeatedly failing to chase and catch that magic number on the scale. Even though the mind intellectually knows that real change is rarely a steady, straight-line kind of thing, and happens over longer periods of time, when success begins to appear, it can be an incredible temptation to check frequently to get that "reward" of feeling successful, so that it's impossible to resist doing it more and more. This becomes the "mental obsession" that often accompanies addiction. There are too many variables having short-term effect on weight (water or salt consumption, time of day, exercise levels, amount of sleep the night before, time since last meal, etc.) that there is no consistent state of the body that can identify an accurate change in body weight within short time frames. That is why it's recommended to only weigh once a month.

Aside from being in regular contact with a recovering food addict sponsor, a great way to manage an obsession is to identify some other, sane behavior to substitute in place of the obsession – a distraction to disrupt and re-direct one's focus, but to one that is healthy and supportive. For example, commit to taking a

recovery action first (e.g. review your daily inventory to affirm that you have had abstinent, weighed and measured meals so far that day or week), whenever the thought comes to step on the scale. This can reinforce the connection between having/following your meal plan and building trust that it IS moving you forward in recovery. A favorite saying in FAA is that "we weigh and measure our food (every day) so we don't have to weigh our bodies (every day).

Another might be to journal a little to identify what is going on in your life and has you worried or anxious, so that stepping on the scale doesn't offer a distraction from the worry. Or – go for a walk, read some affirmations, listen to some favorite music, call a friend. Do something to create a pause between feeling the need to step on the scale and acting on it, a pause that reduces or defuses the urge to weigh yourself. I wish you and your friend freedom and joy in the sunlight of life.

Annie



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS FOR "ABSTINENT ANNIE" TO: FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com

ABSTINENT ANNIE IS SIMPLY ANOTHER FOOD ADDICT WHO IS PASSIONATE ABOUT FAA AND HAS MANY YEARS OF ABSTINENCE.

Filling the Spiritual Void

From Food for the Soul, Page 69

“Addictive food was our false idol. It delivered a temporary illusion of serenity at a very high price. It claimed health, sanity, self-respect, and the chance to connect with others. It usurped the rightful place of a Higher Power who loves us without demanding sacrifice, a Higher Power who loves us for who we are, a Higher Power who supports us and rejoices in our well-being and happiness.

When we first become abstinent, we recognize the frightful depths of our spiritual abyss. The sense of loss and emptiness that some of us experience can be profound. But we trust and remain calm. We allow that empty space to lie fallow, without rushing to fill it with activity or other diversion, and soon we find that it is filled with something far greater than what the food ever gave us.

For today, whenever I sense a spiritual void, I pray to open my heart to God.”



Topics for AT Summer Edition

Inviting all sponsors to submit short articles on how sponsorship has enhanced their own recovery.

Or you can write about how having a sponsor helps you learn and sustain your abstinent journey.

All articles will be edited for spelling, punctuation, & grammar.

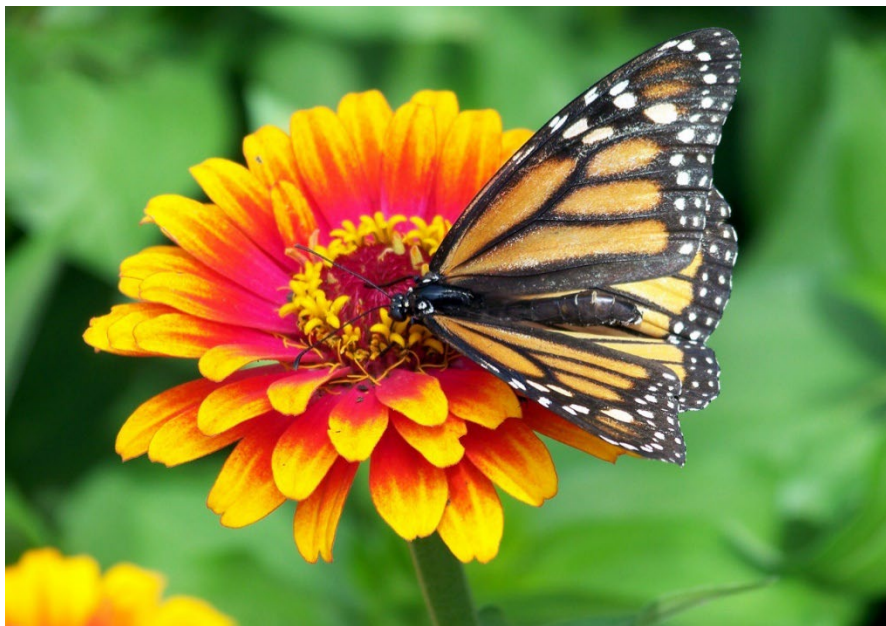
Please send your article to:

FAAatnewsletter@gmail.com

Reflection on this meditation – Facing the Void

The spiritual void was there and felt greater the more and more I ate. The food never filled it. Only when I was abstinent did I feel the agony and vastness of the spiritual void. That's why I kept relapsing - the emptiness of abstinence and not getting to eat what I wanted.

Working through step 4 identified the blocks and burdens, and the void opened up, and step 5 invited God in. Then in step 7, God removed the blocks to the presence of God. I felt God fill my body. I didn't realize that I hadn't felt God in my body! The “void” has been



filled with the presence of God. There is no void now.

Continuous relapse for years was about not wanting to face the void, but really it was about not wanting to face God. Fear of God in Step 4 was critical to address. God showed up, in the steps. Don't relapse. Do whatever it takes to stay abstinent and

face the void. God is loyal and will show up and fill the void.

For today, I ask God for the courage to face the void, the absence of active food addiction.

Ode to My Sweet Things

**I have known you all my life.
You have been dependable,
and effective.**

**You have dispelled my anxiety,
softened my mood,
comforted my pain,
mediated my perceptions and
managed my emotions.**

**You worked for a very long time,
except when you didn't:
when the cost began adding up,
pound by pound;
when the secrecy became
shame-filled and the cravings
uncontrollable —
cravings that drove me
to rummage through cupboards
or to drive miles
in search of a corner store or market,
still open.**

**You were an unfailing but
fraudulent friend
who offered counterfeit comfort
and temporary mood-alteration:
no flesh-and-bone companion to
hear my stories;
not worthy to receive my hopes,
dreams, faults, and failings;
no gracious friend able to extend
to me
what we all truly need and desire:
acceptance, and love.**

**So now I open my hand and let go
of you
day by day.**

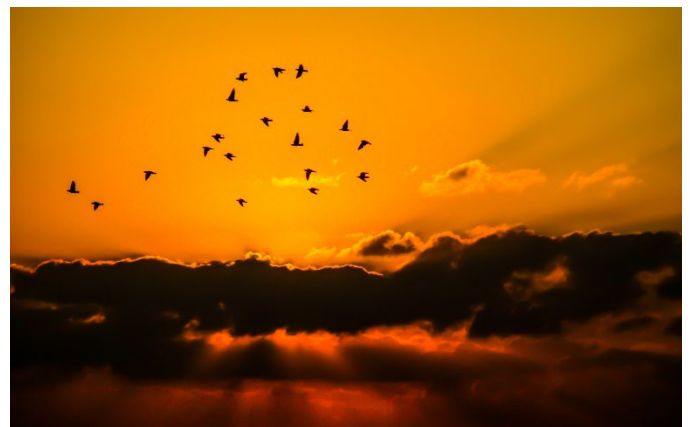
**I'm unsettled —
I feel my identity shifting.**

**But without you, I am what I was with
you:**

**a relational being
created for relationship
with other living things.**

**I will risk flesh-and-blood
companionship
and marvel at beauty;
cook food and eat in gratitude for
all things,
including the gift of my
miraculous, fleshy body.**

**And as I let you go day by day,
sweet things,
I lay claim to the things I have learned
from the negative space you define
in my life:
that I am worthy of love
and created to be in relationship
with God, with the earth, with others
and with myself.**



The Magic of Sharing Our Experience, Strength, and Hope

I am someone who is rarely motivated from within to write something, especially to share with someone else. But when I received the Winter 2023 issue of *The Abstinent Times* and read the article "I am always going to be a food addict," I felt compelled to share on this subject. You see, from my earliest days of recovery from my food addiction, that thought was foremost in my mind and heart. And I was blessed with acceptance of that fact. It's just the way my brain chemistry is.

I often use analogies to help me understand and remember important information. The relief and freedom I experienced in abstinence felt like I had finally been released from the physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual prison I lived in for almost 50 years. So, it was easy to see myself as an "ex-con" who had been paroled from the prison of food addiction.

An ex-con must follow certain terms of parole in order to remain free. Terms such as: regularly check in with a parole officer (a sponsor); avoid associating with known felons (avoid binge buddies or places); cannot possess dangerous weapons (sugar, flour, wheat and recognized personal problem foods); become useful, law-abiding citizens (stick to my food plan for the day, follow the steps to recovery, do service); network with positive role models and resources (connect with fellow food addicts); learn more about myself, food addiction and recovery (read and study FAA literature) to name a few.

Doing these things has enabled me to grow strong honesty muscles and personal self-discipline. (I once read that self-discipline is the only true freedom we have.) In my more than 26 years of abstinence in FAA, I have had two very close calls with breaking my abstinence (year 3 and year 6), and the ONLY thing that prevented it was the discipline and commitment to ask my HP for the willingness to seek abstinence for the next 24 hours before I begin to eat each meal. Only then could I see the cunning, baffling and powerful face of addiction and step back and away from what I was

about to do with my eyes wide open (while acknowledging that I would, of course, be sure to tell my sponsor later what I had done – pure insanity). There is much truth in the saying that *there are times when an addict has no effective mental defense against the first pick-up.*

An old saying goes that "knowledge is power." Knowledge of the existence of food addiction, that there IS a solution, is necessary to overcome this disease. But knowledge without action is useless. We in FAA are so blessed with the miracle of knowledge, and the means of attaining the willingness to act on and use this knowledge.



Celebrating Years of FAA Abstinence

Katie from NZ – 2 Years
Pamela from CA – 3 Years
Kathy from MO – 3 Years
Ann from SC – 8 Years
Joe E. from New York – 8 Years
Trisha from MD – 11 Years

First Cleveland area F2F meeting in 1989 is reopening.

Monday, January 8th, 2024, 5:00pm
University Hospital's Parma Health Education Center
7300 State Rd.
Parma, Ohio 44134

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A Daily Turnover

**God, Grant me the Willingness to seek Abstinence this next 24 hours,
That my Mind may remain clear to hear Your guidance;
My Body, well to do Your work,
And my Spirit Free and Willing to seek Your path.
Grant safe passage of this day, that no harm may come
As a result of my Actions or Inactions.
And show me HOW to seek and do Your will,
That I might increase in usefulness
as a channel of your presence here on earth.
In ALL things May Thy Will, not mine be done.**

Amen