

How to Live In Recovery Program
Additional Sponsor Materials
Introduction To Our Program

General Information

1. This program was founded in 2014 to help food addicts who continually struggle with abstinence.
2. The most common participant is:
 - Someone who found abstinence early in their program and then something happened; they lost their abstinence, and could not get it back for unknown reasons.
 - Someone who has been in our food addiction program a while, never attained the 90 days and has been frustrated with not being able to get abstinent.
3. All our groups are free to attend. The printing of the materials is the only cost.
4. Our Program, like an AWOL, is a supplement to our food addiction program and is only available to food addicts who have their sponsor's permission to attend

Our Philosophy

1. To practice our primary purpose of helping the struggling food addict who still suffers. (Tradition 5)
2. To practice loving-kindness, compassion and patience towards struggling food addicts. (Tradition 2)
3. To teach relapsing food addicts to focus on the solution of recovery rather than the problems of addiction.
4. To help non struggling food addicts to strengthen their programs.

Group #1

1. **The How To Live In Recovery (HLR) 10 Week Groups For Relapsing Food Addicts**
 - We create a unique, safe environment that is accepting, non-judgmental, non-shaming and compassionate.
 - We provide support, learning and encouragement on our participant's abstinence journey.
 - During our 10-week group, our participants learn new ways to effectively do the tools of our food addiction program in the effort to find a pathway to recovery.
 - The addition of our specially designed support materials, documents, and checklists help our participants learn the importance of doing these tools every day.
 - We problem-solve tool issues and teach our participants to live their life between their meals and tools.
 - Everyone shares on our each of our conference calls, no matter the number of days of abstinence. We limit our group size so that all participants can share twice on each group call.
 - Our goal is to fully support our participants so they can learn and grow in recovery. Our participants get a buddy, who helps them complete each week's homework and focus on being prepared for each call.

Important Questions For HLR Group Applicants

1. Do you think participating in this group will help you right now? (Yes or No)
2. Are you open-minded about learning new positive attitudes and behaviors and following our suggestions for these 10 weeks? (Yes or No)
3. Are you able to print the 130+ pages of binder materials for the group? (Yes or No)
4. Can you commit the time, energy and focus needed for the entire 10 weeks to do the weekly homework? (Yes or No)
5. Will you commit, schedule and do a minimum one hour of weekly homework? (Yes or No)
6. Are you willing to have an honest discussion with your sponsor about our program and your need for this extra help? (Yes or No)
7. Are you ready to live in contented recovery? (Yes or No)
8. Look for an email from howtoliveinrecovery2@gmail.com which will include your registration materials. If you don't see it, email the address above.

How to Live In Recovery Program

Program History

By Sally J, founder

I am a food addict and have been in FA since 7/4/03. I have not struggled with abstinence. Here is my story working with food addicts struggling with abstinence and recovery and the evolution into eleven free Programs for struggling food addicts, co-facilitators and sponsors.

I used my experiences in FA, sponsoring, my recovery, co-leading and participating in AWOLS, working as a special education teacher and my organizational and problem-solving skills to create the curriculum for all our programs. I am grateful to those who continue to help and support me on this journey.

As you can see, this work has become my passion and I am now strongly committed to this challenge because it is wonderful for my recovery to be able to provide this service. Tradition 5 states that our primary purpose is to help the food addict who still suffers. Our Program does this with loving-kindness and compassion which is Tradition 2. Support our purpose by sharing our website: howtogetabstinent.org with anyone in our food addiction program struggling with abstinence who wants our help.

Individual Program: In 2013, a friend in FA asked me to help her get abstinence. I thought this was a very bad idea since I had no experience or idea how to help her. I felt tremendous fear, doubt and insecurity. Very reluctantly I said yes because she was struggling and wanted abstinence and seemed desperate. We worked together trying many ideas. She was willing to try anything. She got abstinent and I documented what worked successfully for her. This was the beginning of our first How To Live In Recovery Program for struggling and suffering food addicts.

A second food addict heard about the first one's success and asked me for help getting abstinent. I tried the ideas that had worked before. Surprisingly, she got abstinent too. Word got out about what I was doing and more people came asking for help. Today I continue working with food addicts individually. We problem-solve their tools and use additional support materials to help them. Currently, all people completing the Individual Program are abstinent.

How to Get Abstinent Recovery Group: Our 2nd program evolved when I had become frustrated with my inability to help all the people who came asking for individual help. So we began the first How to Get Abstinent Recovery Group in February 2014 with two groups. It was very exciting to be able to reach so many people throughout the USA and other countries using the conference call format. The group materials were duplicated from the successful Individual Program. When participants finish the group program they join our weekly Ongoing Relapse Prevention Group.

Sponsor Information Conference Call Group: Our 3rd program started in 2014. The purpose of the Sponsor Conference Call was to share what we had learned with sponsors and help support their work with their sponsees.

Ongoing Relapse Prevention Group: Our fourth program began in 2014. This group was created because of a need for continued support after completing the How to Get Abstinent Recovery and Individual and Group Programs.

Steps 1-2-3 Go and AWOL Groups: Our 5th and 6th programs started in 2015 & 2016 offering our graduates an introduction to Steps 1-2-3. Followed by a study of the 12 Steps with no abstinence required.

Buddy Program and Conference Call Group: Our seventh and eighth programs started in 2016 to help our graduates who supported How To Live In Recovery Program Group participant's during their 10 week group.

Co-facilitator Conference Call: Our 9th program started in 2017. Its purpose is to support our co-facilitators and to get their feedback as to how to make our programs better.

How to Live In Recovery Programs Summary of Our Nine Free Programs

What Are the Requirements To Be a Participant

Be working with a Program sponsor who supports your participation.

1. **HLR:** Be a food addict who is relapsing and struggling to get abstinent.

Our Program Statistics as of 2/1/23

2175 people completed our 5 programs listed below:

1. **1185** people completed our How To Live In Recovery Groups.
2. **484** people completed our Individual Program.
3. **374** people completed our Steps 1-2-3 Go Groups.
4. **132** people completed our AWOL Groups.

1. How To Live In Recovery Groups (HLR)

10 week-conference call groups for food addicts struggling with abstinence.

2. Ongoing Relapse Prevention Groups (ORPG)

Weekly ongoing conference calls for graduates of the HLR to study about recovery and relapse prevention.

3. Buddy Program

HLR Program graduates use their valuable group experience to help new HLR participants

4. Individual Program

15 minute one-on-one-phone calls for our group graduates needing individual and more support

5. Steps 1-2-3 Go Groups

12 week conference call for graduates to study the Steps 1-2-3, an introduction to the 12 Steps, with no abstinence requirement to continue in the group, but an attendance policy

6. AWOL Groups

24 week conference call for graduates to study the 12 Steps, no abstinence requirement to continue in the group, but an attendance policy

7. Sponsor Information Conference Calls

Conference calls providing information and support to our participants' sponsors

8. Buddy Information Conference Calls

Conference calls providing information and support to buddies.

9. Co-facilitator Information Conference Calls

Conference calls providing information and support to our co-facilitators

How To Live In Recovery Program

70 Journal Writing Topics

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have I used food to face life?2. What would I lose by leaving Program?3. Count my blessings.4. I am a work in progress.5. One Step at a Time.6. This too shall pass.7. Have I truly surrendered to the Program?8. Keep things simple.9. Live and Let Live.10. Easy Does It.11. Let Go and Let God.12. First Things First.13. I See Things Differently Now Because...14. Just for Today.15. What is humility?16. Ignorance prevents learning.17. What does love mean to me?18. I am not a failure even if I experience failure.19. Program is not my life, but it gives me a life.20. How have I allowed false pride to defeat me?21. How can anger be a constructive force?22. How well am I handling my problems? | <ol style="list-style-type: none">23. What does recovery mean to me?24. Can I get well?25. Success is never final.26. Feelings are not a call to action.27. Over-commitment is dangerous.28. Moderation is a way of life.29. Love: Then and Now.30. What is my concept of happiness?31. Have I found inner contentment?32. Focus on the solution and not the problem.33. Am I the master of my emotions?34. Kindness is produced by kindness.35. Write on "giving in" and why I do it.36. A friend is to be taken with all their faults.37. Patience is the companion of wisdom.38. Actions speak louder than words.39. Have I allowed hostility to take over?40. Reverse a negative thought and write about it.41. In what ways do I look for joy in my life?42. What is holding me back from getting well?43. Take the world as it is, not as it ought to be.44. Reflect upon the importance of growing up |
|--|---|
45. Why is it important that I think of myself first?
 46. What does the Serenity Prayer mean to me and how can it help my life?
 47. What have flour, sugar and quantities done to my life? Do I have an allergy to them?
 48. List the things I want out of life. How many of these things are really important? Why?
 49. What about my life would I like to change? How would I change it?
 50. What do I fear? How many of these things are beyond my control?
 51. Am I deceiving myself when I eat to punish someone else? Who am I really hurting?
 52. Has the drive for perfection been a realistic goal in my life? How has this helped or hindered me?
 53. Discuss the dangers of my obsessions as I see them (mental, physical and spiritual).
 54. Can I afford to have my pre-Program insanity back?
 55. Do I really listen when people talk to me? How do I listen?
 56. Write on how the child within me often controls my life.
 57. Discuss and reflect upon the need for self-worth. List my good points.
 58. What were my expectations yesterday? Am I realistic about them today?
 59. How are others in Program acting as my mirror?
 60. Think of someone you haven't seen in a while and give them a call. Reflect and write on reaching out.
 61. Boredom is a bar against learning. Discuss the idea that boredom is part of our disease.
 62. We can't love others until we love ourselves. How does this relate to our feelings today or yesterday?
 63. Action is a magic word. Why is this word important to me today?
 64. I will never be perfect. I can only do my very best.
 65. What are the disadvantages of eating as though I was normal?
 66. Write about my spiritual and physical bottom.
 67. What does food mean to me today? How does it affect me now?
 68. Why do I consider myself a food addict? Why do I insist on letting my addiction destroy me?
 69. I need to weigh and measure my food so I can learn to weigh and measure my life.
 70. When and how do I allow self-pity to rule my life?

How to Live in Recovery Program Twelve Step Recovery Slogan Journal Topics

Reality Checks

1. You are not alone
2. Live in recovery for yourself
3. Sick and tired of being sick and tired
4. Remember your last binge
5. Look for similarities rather than differences
6. It takes time to get better
7. A journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step
8. Depression can be anger turned inward
9. The flip side to forgiveness is resentments
10. The elevator is broken, use the 'steps'
11. If I think, I won't eat; If I eat, I can't think
12. When your head begins to swell your mind stops growing
13. I ate too much, too often, too long
14. It isn't the load that weighs us down, it's the way we carry it
15. Minds are like parachutes. They won't work unless they're open
16. Remember that addiction is cunning, baffling powerful, incurable, progressive, and deadly
Deadly and progressive
17. When a person tries to control their addiction they have already lost control

Staying In Recovery

1. One bite is too many and one thousand is not enough
2. It's the "first" bite that gets you
3. Nothing is so bad, that eating won't make it worse
4. Keep coming back
5. Stay away from the First Bite
6. Most folks commit suicide by eating
7. Try not to place conditions on your recovery
8. Bring the body, and the mind will follow
9. Every recovery from addiction began with one minute
10. You are not required to like it; you're only required to DO IT
11. We all have another bite left in us but we don't know if we have another recovery in us
12. Be as enthusiastic about recovery as you were about your addiction
13. First, we live in recovery because we have to, then we stay in recovery because we are willing to, finally we stay in recovery because we want to.
14. The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow. Don't give up.
15. The moment you're ready to quit is usually the moment right before the miracle happens. Don't give up
16. Fight for your recovery

Denial

1. I want what I want, when I want it
2. Addiction is the only disease that tells you you're all right
3. Are you around recovery or "in" recovery?
4. The first step in overcoming mistakes is to admit them
5. There are none too dumb for the 12 Step Program, but many are too smart
6. Knowledge of "the solutions" never made anyone break, it was failing to practice "the solutions"

Recovery Acronyms and Word Associations

1. H.A.L.T. = hungry, angry, lonely, tired.
2. H.O.W = honesty, open-mindedness and willingness
3. Kiss = keep it simple sweetie
4. Anger is but one letter away from danger
5. Faith = a-c-t-i-o-n
6. We can be positive that our eating was negative
7. EGO = Edge God Out
8. Keep your sobriety first, to make it last
9. Fear stands for Frustration

Spirituality

1. Spirituality is the ability to get our minds off ourselves
2. The road to disappointment is paved with expectation
3. If it is meant to be, I can't stop it
4. Spirituality is for those who have been to hell and back
5. To be forgiven, we must forgive
6. God = Good Orderly Direction
7. If it isn't my Higher Power's will, I can't make it happen.
8. Pain is the touchstone of spiritual growth
9. You're exactly where your Higher Power wants you
10. Be careful what you pray for, you're liable to get it
11. Recovery delivers everything recovery promises
12. Faith is not belief without proof but trust without Question
13. Our Higher Power taught us to laugh again and not forget we once cried
14. Time wasted in getting even can never be used in getting ahead
15. It's a pity we can't forget our troubles the same way we forget our blessings
16. A coincidence is a miracle in which your Higher Power chooses to remain anonymous
17. Serenity is not freedom from the storm but peace amid the storm
18. We are not human beings having spiritual experiences, but spiritual beings having human experiences

How To Live In Recovery Program

100 My Addict Brain Is a Liar Journal Topics

This Is Negative Addict Thinking
 Use These Topics to Gain Awareness of These Lies
 We Can Refuse to Believe These Lies and Consciously Fight Against Them
 Use the Affirmation Journal Sheet for Positive Recovery Thinking (Next Page)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I outreach call is enough. 2. A little bite won't hurt me. 3. Cutting corners is fine. 4. Does God care? 5. Don't be so self-centered. 6. Don't tell your sponsor. 7. Eating is fun. 8. Food is love. 9. Food is pleasure. 10. Get real. 11. God doesn't love you. 12. I am not a food addict. 13. I can do it just this once. 14. I can do the tools my way. 15. I can't go any longer. 16. I can have just one bite. 17. I can't cope. 18. I can't do this. 19. I need more nutrition. 20. I need more. 21. I will stop tomorrow. 22. I'll buy this for the kids. 23. I'll start my diet tomorrow. 24. It doesn't really matter. 25. It is just fruit. 26. It is just one bite. 27. It's okay to lie. 28. It's hopeless. 29. Little breaks are okay. 30. Moderation is the key. 31. No one knows but you. 32. No one will ever know. 33. No one will know but me. 34. Start tomorrow. 35. This is too hard. 36. This isn't realistic. 37. Try a different, better way. 38. Who cares? 39. Why try? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 40. You are a failure. 41. You are being selfish. 42. You are defective. 43. You are hopeless. 44. You are not worth it. 45. You deserve a treat. 46. You deserve this. 47. You should taste that. 48. You're different. 49. You're not fun anymore. 50. 12 Step Programs are a joke. 51. Coffee and caffeine are my one treat. 52. Don't be rude, eat what is served. 53. Don't let anyone tell you what to do. 54. Food will make you feel better. 55. I am feeling lightheaded so I need to eat. 56. I am not worthy of living in recovery. 57. I can do the Program my way 58. I can exercise these calories away. 59. I can push through the pain. 60. I didn't eat lunch so I can eat more. 61. I don't have to go to meetings. 62. I don't need committed phone calls. 63. I need caffeine to get me through the day. 64. If I don't say yes, they won't like me. 65. If it hurts, I'm doing it right. 66. I'm buying this for my husband 67. I'm starving, maybe starving to death. 68. It doesn't count if no sees me eat it. 69. It is only food after all everyone has to eat. 70. Just one bite doesn't count as a break. 71. Just one taste is all I'll have. 72. Life is too short to work this hard. 73. No one keeps over 100 pounds off. 74. No one will know if I eat this. 75. No one will know if you take a quick bite. 76. Nobody can stay abstinent forever. 77. One bite won't hurt or matter. 78. Others do it, why can't you? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 79. Baking is your best talent. 80. Recovery is for other people, not me. 81. Some people are meant to be thick. 82. They won't like you if you stop. 83. This is ruining your marriage. 84. This one bite won't matter, you deserve it. 85. This Program is too controlling. 86. This time it will be different. 87. This time it won't turn into a binge. 88. We do not want to waste that food. 89. What they don't know can't hurt them. 90. What's the use, it's too much work. 91. Why weigh? You're eating abstinent food. 92. You are too far gone for this to help. 93. You ate a lot, why not eat the rest. 94. You can't follow the Program. 95. You know how to get back on Program. 96. You will perish without sugar. 97. You're a chronic quitter, loser, failure. 98. Your case is different, special, and unique. 99. A small amount over or under does not really matter. 100. Artificial sweeteners aren't that bad for you.
---	---	--

How To Live In Recovery Program

100 Affirmation Journal Topics To Use For Positive Recovery Thinking

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can do this. 2. I never give up. 3. I am hopeful. 4. I am ready. 5. I am organized. 6. I am responsible. 7. I'm worth it. 8. I deserve recovery. 9. I can get through this. 10. I am committed. 11. I like living. 12. I suit up and show up. 13. I love my food. 14. I have freedom. 15. Recovery benefits me. 16. I have serenity/ peace. 17. I am imperfect. 18. I plan, plan, plan! 19. My mind is calming. 20. I am disciplined. 21. I am growing up. 22. I give appropriately. 23. I grow in love daily. 24. I am precious and free. 25. I let others support me. 26. My food is so healthy. 27. I am ready to be happy. 28. I make good decisions. 29. I have a lot of energy. 30. I let go with love. 31. I have a great life. 32. I pre-plan my food. 33. I deserve happiness. 34. I practice patience. 35. I practice acceptance. 36. I live in gratitude. 37. Recovery is love. 38. I put my Program first. 39. I am loved. 40. I am a worthy person. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 41. My brain is clearing. 42. God loves me. 43. I am my best friend. 44. Marvelous Monday. 45. Terrific Tuesday. 46. This day brings me joy. 47. Wonderful Wednesday. 48. Tremendous Thursday. 49. Fabulous Friday. 50. Sensational Saturday. 51. Super Sunday. 52. I matter in this world. 53. I do the right things. 54. I make needed amends. 55. I kindly ask for help. 56. I refuse to give up. 57. I fight for my recovery. 58. I choose recovery. 59. I am safe and sound. 60. All is well today 61. Others have done it, so can I! 62. I love unconditionally. 63. I am grateful each and every day. 64. I am a good son/daughter. 65. I am a good brother/sister. 66. I am a good mother/father. 67. I tell my sponsor the truth. 68. I am no longer judgmental. 69. Through discipline I get freedom. 70. I have good & loving relationships. 71. I remember the lessons of my past. 72. I can be a good example for others. 73. I take risks on this path to growth. 74. I practice progress, not perfection. 75. I love and respect the way I am. 76. My life gets richer each day. 77. I let go of my anger/resentments. 78. I keep my eyes on my own plate. 79. I see breaks as growth/learning. 80. I am a rich treasure to be found. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 81. I do all my tools & support materials daily, no matter what, no excuses! 82. The more I give away the more I get. 83. I smile and let others in on the secret. 84. I ask for help graciously when I need it and give help graciously. 85. I celebrate with friends by having fun without eating and drinking. 86. I approach each day as a fresh start. 87. My recovery food makes me feel fabulous. 88. I have the right to feel the way I do. 89. I practice love, kindness and compassion with myself/others. 90. I live my life between my meals and my tools. 91. In recovery, I work on the needed changes that come my way. 92. Today letting go is best for me, my family, my friends and others. 93. I am imperfect and working on being the best person I can be. 94. I express my feelings appropriately. 95. I push through my resistance to do what is best for me. 96. I do service to strengthen my recovery while helping others. 97. I have stopped hurting myself with food because it is poison for me. 98. Everything is getting better every day. 99. I say no when I mean no, and yes when I mean yes. 100. I choose a recovery centered-life over an addiction centered-life.
--	---	---

How To Live In Recovery Program
Food Information Sheet
What to Do for Maximum Weight Loss
By Sally J

Your Sponsors is in Charge of Your Food Plan Choices

1. This Food Information Sheet was written for my sponsees.
2. There are varying options about what foods are acceptable on our food plans.
3. Therefore, consult with your sponsor about their opinion of acceptable foods.
4. **Your sponsor decides your food plan choices.**
5. As always, follow your doctor's advice.

1. Remember to eat only weighed and measured meals.(stay abstinent)
2. Eat the protein suggestions for maximum weight loss. (see below)
3. Avoid eating the foods listed for maximum weight loss.(see below)
4. It has been recommended that we eat 2 ounces of cooked grain for lunch and 2 ounces of cooked grain for dinner for the weight loss food plan.
5. Eat at a kitchen or dining room table, not in front of a TV, etc.
6. Some people might consider eating 6 times a day, instead of 3. They can schedule their weighed and measured meals as breakfast 1 and 2, lunch 1 and 2 and dinner 1 and 2. This includes people that are:
 - Diabetic
 - Have had gastric bypass
 - Have had multiple weight losses in Program and are not losing weight
 - People with low blood sugar
 - Older and other people having digestive challenges
7. Schedule, measure and drinking water daily. (½ of your body weight in ounces)
8. Schedule and practice low impacts exercise.(3 times weekly, for 30 minutes)

The Information Below Was Compiled By a Nutritionist in FA.

Protein Suggestions for Maximum Weight Loss

- 8 oz of non fat-plain yogurt
- 4 oz of chicken, turkey, low fat fish, non fat cottage cheese, beans, lentils or tofu
- 2 oz of nuts, seeds or both
- 2 eggs

Foods to Avoid for Maximum Weight Loss

Proteins:

- Cheese
- Red meat, sausage and hot dogs

Vegetables:

- Corn
- Peas
- Winter squash (butternut, acorn, banana squash , etc)
- Avocado
- Beets

Fruits:

- Grapes
- Tropical fruits (banana, mango, coconut and papaya)

Potato (white, red, yam and sweet potatoes)

How To Live In Recovery Program Should I Join An AWOL

How Do I Get and Stay Abstinent?

1. In other 12 Steps Programs addicts give up their drug of choice and immediately start working the 12 Steps to get sober.
2. For food addicts it is not that simple. Food is essential and cannot be totally eliminated. Food addicts must learn how to manage food daily: they must follow a disciplined eating plan that requires planning, weighing and measuring in addition to eliminating flour and sugar. Some food addicts adjust to this new way of eating immediately and some white knuckle abstinence. The majority of food addicts need time and practice to change old habits into new ones. Relapse is a reality for many. Food addicts do not need to be punished for their breaks; they must be taught how to use them as learning and growth opportunities.
3. The How to Get Abstinent Recovery Program teaches struggling food addicts to live in recovery by teaching them how to effectively do all their tools and our support materials daily. Once they are doing all their tools and our support materials daily, they no longer have to “white-knuckle” or work to get abstinent, but they get the gift of abstinence.

AWOLS Do Not Get and Keep Food Addicts Abstinent!

1. Many sponsors do not understand the struggling food addict, but have good intention when they suggest their sponsee’s join an AWOL. Maybe they also heard that AWOL’s get and keep food addicts abstinent.
2. After co-leading 6 AWOLS, I realized that they alone do not get and keep food addicts abstinent.
3. I collected data on the number of people who left my AWOLS because they were not abstinent. In those six AWOL groups, 75-90 percent of the participants left because they had breaks. Those numbers are shocking!
4. Relapsing food addicts have told me that being “kicked out” of multiple AWOLS is very traumatic. AWOL does not get and keep food addicts abstinent. In fact for many, AWOLS prove to be a negative experience: for those who have a break and are asked to leave and for those that remain and see their fellows being shunned from the group.
5. We do not recommend any AWOL’s or 12 Step Studies that have an abstinence requirement. They are painful for those that are “kicked out” and equally painful for those watching their friends be “kicked out.”

Our No-Abstinence Required AWOL Offers Recovery and Compassion!

1. The wonderful option of attending one of our no-abstinence required AWOLS is available to all graduates of the How to Get Abstinent Recovery Program Group. When our group graduates are living in strong recovery, they are ready to learn and strengthen their program by participating in an AWOL. In our no-abstinence required AWOLS food addicts will not be traumatized by being “kicked out” yet again.
2. Graduates of our AWOLS have told us how excited they were to have completed their very first AWOL after many failed attempts.

Living the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Recovery

The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of recovery are now how I live my life. At first, we read the steps and traditions and then we complete a thorough study so we can live them in our daily lives. Living the steps and traditions helps me accept myself as an imperfect person and guides my learning and growing in recovery. Today I understand our purpose is to practice the steps and traditions and to live steps 10, 11 and 12 every day.

1. **Step 10:** “Continue to take **personal inventory** and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” Every day I review my day and ask myself what I need to do differently in order to become what my Higher Power intends for me to be, my best self.
2. **Step 11:** “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our **conscious contact** with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” Throughout the day, I listen for what I am being directed to do. I have been inspired to write materials by listening to people whose comments provide me with ideas.
3. **Step 12:** “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps; we tried to **carry this message** to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” I strive to do service by helping the large number of food addicts who are struggling to find recovery and by teaching others how to live in recovery. Doing service strengthens everyone’s recovery.

How to Live In Recovery Programs Feedback from Our Graduates

What Was the Best Part of the How To Live In Recovery Program?

1. Doing the homework. It opened my eyes to my behaviors and how that contributed to my addiction and overall unhappiness and, most importantly, what I can do to change these thoughts and behaviors.
2. The realization that recovery was a process and that I was still okay even if I broke. I was allowed to dust myself off and try again, instead of descending into self-loathing and trying to hide from people.
3. Loved the recovery support sheets, very motivating, and encouraging. They felt like a warm hug.

Did You Feel Safe While Doing the Program?

1. Yes, so very safe, particularly because you treated me with the greatest of honor, respect, and compassion. What a relief it is to know I can be 100% honest.
2. Yes, very safe. The leaders created a safe environment right from the start. I could feel their integrity and absolute dedication to this group of individuals and the success of the program immediately. In my opinion, by setting the stage so well, the participants feel safe.
3. Yes, so grateful there was no blame, shame or judgment, only encouragement.

What Changes Have You Made Since Completing the Program?

1. My abstinence has been squeaky clean. I am doing all my tools morning and night every day. I'm feeling less fearful each day since doing this program. I feel I'm getting rid of guilt, shame, judgment and perfectionism. I have been 100% honest with my new sponsor. I am feeling secure and free to question things with her.
2. I am in recovery and I guard my abstinence very carefully. I have a new reverence for my abstinence.
3. I've recommitted to recovery and feel back on the beam, something I haven't felt for a long time.
4. I am now doing all my tools and support materials daily and am surrendering more to the program.
5. I now pass on the message of kindness and compassion to those who still suffer.

What Feedback Do You Have For Us?

1. I just want to thank you for your commitment to service. This was a remarkable experience and it would not have been possible if you had not stepped up to make it happen. I'm amazed and inspired by the power of it all.
2. I cannot thank you enough for my new life. Although it's still just one day at a time, I believe neither wind, nor storm, nor will dark of night ever pull me off this wonderful recovery journey I'm on. I'm not afraid of a break of course. I'm not ever going to view it as a tragic event if it ever were to happen. I'm sure footed now and intend to stay that way. I'm hoping to look back fondly on these memorable experiences that have so greatly contributed to my change.
3. Thank you for recognizing the need for the relapser who may need that push to get up the hill.
4. I will be forever grateful for your love of the relapser. I am so appreciative of the time that you have invested in this program. I will be forever blessed by it! Thank you!!
5. I love you so very much for giving me just what I needed to get back on track.

How To Live In Recovery Program
Suggested Readings On Food Addiction And Relapse Prevention

Top 5 Suggested Books

1. *The Language of Letting Go, Daily Meditations*, By Melody Beattie
 - We use this book in our Ongoing Relapse Prevention Groups.
 - Good for your morning or evening reading book
2. *Each Day A New Beginning, Daily Meditations for Women*, By Karen Casey
 - Good for your morning or evening reading book
3. *Staying Sober: A Guide for Relapse Prevention*, By Terence Gorski
 - We use this book in our Ongoing Relapse Prevention Groups.
 - This book is available at amazon.com, 800-767-8181, Gorski's website: ww.relapse.org etc.
4. *Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind*, By Kristin Neff
 - Good for becoming aware of our need to practice exquisite self-care through self-compassion.
5. *Forgive for Good, Holding a Grudge Is Hazardous to Your Health*, By Dr. Fred Luskin
 - Good for practicing forgiveness and letting go of resentments.

Additional Outstanding Suggested Books

1. *The Promise of a New Day, Daily Meditations*, By Karen Casey and Martha Vanceburg
2. *The Gifts of Imperfection, Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*, By Brene Brown
3. *I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't)*, By Brene Brown.
4. *The Courage to Be Yourself; A Woman's Guide to Emotional Strength and Self-Esteem*, By Sue Patton Thoele
5. *Love Is Letting Go of Fear*, By Dr Gerald Jampolsky
6. *A Return to Love*, By Marianne Williamson
7. *The Joy of Living, Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness*, By Yongey Mingyir Rinpoche
8. *The Art of Happiness, a Handbook For Life*, By His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Dr Howard Cutler.

How to Live In Recovery Programs

What I learned From the How to Live in Recovery 10 Week Group

When I started this program I was in my 8th year of FA. Six of those years I was abstinent, but had little recovery. The last two years I struggled after having a break and felt emotionally drained and hopeless. I continued to participate in my FA meetings but often felt the message was for newcomers and not for me, the struggling food addict. It was in my second year of chronic relapse when someone suggested the How to Get Abstinent Program and I thank God I listened to their suggestion. I want to share what I learned from attending this group.

Food addiction is a cunning, baffling, powerful, deadly and progressive disease and I am a food addict to my deepest core. I learned there should be no guilt, shame, judgment or personal failing, in being a chronic relapser, and that I needed to stop blaming myself for being a food addict. I have the daily choice to stay in recovery by using the tools and support materials I was taught, or I can choose to eat addictively, First, when challenges arise, I practice the 3 A's of change in recovery: awareness, acceptance and action, 1) being aware of the issue at hand, 2) accepting it for what it is, and 3) taking the next right action.

Second, I learned to practice exquisite self-care and practice self-compassion. I started to get rid of my negative self-talk and found that positive affirmations increased my self-esteem and hope in recovery. No one is perfect, although I tried to be perfect. Now, when I make mistakes or if I were to have a break, I look at these as golden opportunities to learn and grow in recovery.

Last, I learned by being in a group of chronic relapsers that I am not the only one thinking that I am a FA loser who will never get this. It would be helpful if FA could focus on the food addicts who struggle and suffer every day. I can't stress how helpful this program was for me and I am thankful there are more groups for me to attend: the Ongoing Relapse Prevention Groups, Steps 1-2-3 Go Group and AWOL Groups which are offered to keep me on my life-long recovery journey.

I will continue to choose to work my tools and support materials every day, give service, and continue to practice exquisite self-care and self-compassion for me and other struggling food addicts by creating hope when there was hopelessness. I am grateful to help other chronic relapsers by being a buddy. Because I have completed the group, I get the privilege of helping a new group participant with their weekly group homework and help them find the happiness I feel today being in recovery.

What Is Food Addiction?

Food addiction is a **DISEASE**, like alcoholism. As food addicts, we use food to relieve stress and soothe feelings. Food addiction is actually more complicated than other addictions because people with other addictions can refrain from their drug of choice, but we cannot refrain from eating. For food addicts, food will always be present in many parts of our lives. Food addiction is **Not About Personal Failings**, but is a **DISEASE**. Food addiction is **Not About Lacking Willpower Or Willingness**, but is more about the intense dopamine signal "hijacking" the biochemistry of our brain resulting in obsession and compulsion to hurt ourselves with food.

Some symptoms of food addiction include: 1) having cravings for food, despite feeling full and having just finished a meal, 2) eating much more than we intended and eating to the point of feeling excessively "stuffed," 3) feeling guilt, shame and judgment after eating, yet finding ourselves eating again, 4) believing the lies that our addict mind tells us about why we should eat something that we are craving, 5) repeatedly trying to quit eating or setting rules about certain foods, but being unsuccessful, 6) hiding our large consumption of foods from others, 7) feeling unable to control our food quantities, despite knowing that this causes us mental, spiritual and physical harm, including unhealthy weight gain, 8) depriving or restricting ourselves of eating and getting proper nutrition, 9) obsessively weighing ourselves on the scale, then making decisions based on the result and 10) having a negative body image; feeling ashamed, self-conscious, uncomfortable, awkward and anxious about our bodies.

I have learned that I have an illness, like alcoholism, like other addictions. It is not a moral failing, but a true disease and is incurable. I can die from this illness or one of its many side effects. It brings on feelings of fear and self-loathing, and causes diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. I have a reason to find a solution for this problem. By Judy Collins (singer)

How To Live In Recovery Program

How Our Participants Feel When They Come to Our Program

Attitudes About Abstinence

1. Feel hopeless and fearful that they will never get abstinent again.
2. Have unsuccessfully tried everything they can think of to get abstinent.
3. Do not know what else to do to get abstinent.
4. Have given up trying after so many failures.
5. Think that they are the only one struggling with abstinence.
6. Feel guilt, shame and judgment about breaking.

Attitudes About Program

1. Feel rejected by Program people who will not sit with them, talk to them or call them because they are not abstinent.
2. Have been afraid of being honest with their sponsors because they fear they will be dropped if they have a break. Many have already had this experience.
3. Feel that they are the only one in program that does not “get it.”
4. Feel judged because they are still struggling after many years in program.
5. Are traumatized because they have been “kicked out” of many AWOLs.
6. Are uncomfortable talking to newcomers, because they consider themselves program failures.
7. Believe what they have been told, that they are “just not willing.”

Additional Attitudes and Behaviors

1. Are stuck in a negative framework and continue to default to talking negatively.
2. Continue to focus on the problem and do not know how to focus on the solution.
3. Feel very stuck in their current situation.
4. Are overly judgmental towards themselves.
5. Are not present or focused because they are “in the food.”
6. Feel fear, doubt and insecurity about themselves and their program.
7. Are resistant to suggestions and continue to try to do it their way.
8. Do not know how to put their program first or practice self care.
9. Expect negative reactions and are surprised when they are not judged.

FYI

Our food addiction program's World Service Board has asked us not to use their program name in any of our literature. Therefore, we are using the word Program, instead of our food addiction program name in all the How To Live In Recovery Program materials.