

## Abstinence

In Overeaters Anonymous abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors.

There are no absolutes for abstinence. For some, abstinence facilitates working the twelve steps; for others, it comes from working the steps. As a result of living the OA program of recovery, the symptom of compulsive eating is removed on a daily basis. Ultimately, we are abstinent because we no longer have the desire to eat compulsively.

Recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous twelve-step program. Many of us have come to believe that committing ourselves to abstinence on a daily basis is essential to our recovery.

Commitment means to entrust, to put into safekeeping, to pledge oneself to a particular course. Hasn't this been our greatest problem: truly committing ourselves to refraining from compulsive eating on an ongoing basis? Full of determination, we are great in the short run; but when the everydayness begins to set in, we lose interest. For most people, especially compulsive overeaters, a diet is something temporary – one goes on it and then goes off it. In Overeaters Anonymous we believe in abstaining from compulsive eating every day, one day at a time.

Each individual is free to determine his or her own way of achieving abstinence according to personal needs and preferences. Abstaining from compulsive eating, unlike dieting has a sense of permanence about it. Unlike our dieting days, we abstain only one day at a time, not worrying about any ensuing results. Each new day we recommit to our personal plan of abstinence, without thinking about tomorrow, next month or next year.

Here are various actions OA members have used to promote their abstinence. You are encouraged to take what you like and leave the rest. The following suggestions are not rules. As you develop your own

abstinence, you may want to discuss your various approaches with your sponsor:

- Develop a plan of eating
- Plan your meals in advance
- Work with a sponsor
- Use the tools
- Remember HALT (don't get too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired)
- Enjoy your meals
- Be conscious of the amount of food you eat
- Follow a predetermined weighing plan