

## **K.N.'s Story**

I am a food addict. I am to food as an alcoholic is to alcohol or a drug addict is to drugs. Over the course of many years, I have had to confront the fact that there are foods I cannot eat sanely, no matter how hard I try. For me, "one" in reference to anything made with flour or sugar literally means "one dozen" or "one pound," or "one carton." My problem is greater than just flour or sugar, however. I have found that I cannot handle unmeasured quantities of food.

I was a skinny child, but I was filled with anxiety. This inhibited my appetite for some years, but when I reached puberty, I began to lean on food to help take the edge off my fear and to make myself feel better. I gravitated to candies and baked goods immediately. By the time I was fifteen, I had begun what became a long struggle with weight. I was nothing if not determined, so twice I did total water fasts for almost a week each time. I became deeply depressed and stopped grooming myself. I felt paralyzed and had a difficult time making any decisions.

During college, I became a full-blown addict, buying food in huge quantities. My books and book bag were covered with grease. No one could understand my weight, since I hid my behavior. I ate every night in bed, on buses and trains, in my car, and many times in bathrooms. My depression deepened and I began to feel suicidal. I refused to buy new clothes and dressed in dark blue and black. I was less and less able to diet.

When I was 26, I joined a program that encouraged members to weigh and measure all food. I was writing a book at the time, and I was determined to finish it. By weighing and measuring my food and avoiding flour and sugar, I found that I could control my weight and focus enough to write. For the next two and a half years I was anorexic. I lost my period, all roundness, and much of my hair. My friends tried to intervene, but I was completely out of touch with reality.

When I finished the book, I had one whole wheat muffin - just one - and I completely lost control of myself. I was bingeing that night and within a day I was bulimic. Over the next six years, I was possessed by eating. Each time I binged, I threw up. Sometimes I spent entire days in a cycle of eating and throwing up. I stayed in the bathroom until I emptied my stomach each time, but I continued to gain weight.

I found the twelve-step program of FA (Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous) at a point when I had lost my will to live. I did not actively plan suicide, as I had before. I just knew that I was going to die because I did not want to live. I began the program without any hope of success. Years of therapy, prayer, and meditation had not saved me from my addiction and there was absolutely nothing left for me to try.

FA has saved my life. By teaching me to abstain from flour and sugar, and by helping me to weigh and measure what I eat, it has given me freedom from the obsession that used to possess me. I have been given so much more than that, though. By working the Twelve Steps, I have found faith in a Higher Power and the inner peace I must have if I am to live without relying on a drug - food. I have been free from bulimia, anorexia, and fat for almost twenty-one years. I am grateful, stable, and happy.

*K.N.*

(More information about FA is available on the web at <http://www.foodaddicts.org/> or interested people may call 603.448.0700)