

## Working On Our "Issues"

In June 2003, a poster named Lora on a lowcarb list wrote:

**Of course I have issues! I know this and I am making great strides in working them out...some in baby steps and some in big giant steps!**

Lora, if I could impart just the most important thing about my journey and how it is working so simply and yet so surprisingly for me, it is that I could not begin to deal, work out, handle, or even really know exactly what "my issues" are/were UNTIL I got my eating fixed. UNTIL I got food-sober and stayed there for a long long time. UNTIL I got strong enough, got accustomed enough to maintaining that foundation of sobriety so those issues could finally wrangle their way up out of my gut and up onto the table of my life where I could finally truly face them and not be compelled to eat them down again.

In my experience, seeking help for our "issues" while we are still actively using is about as (in)effective as seeking therapy for an alcoholic who is still actively drinking. In my opinion, this isn't LIKE an addiction, it IS one, and addicted people can't and don't make sense or consistent decisions, we don't reveal our truths, and we cannot be "reached or taught" when we're intoxicated, be it via Ho-Ho's or heroin.

The refrain (whine) we hear from people who are trying to view and approach this as an addiction, as an actual substance-abusing behavior, is that quitting food is NOT like quitting alcohol or any other drug. Anybody can refrain from drinking even a drop of alcohol for as long as they live, but the same is just not true of food. We all have to eat. Thus, they claim, it is **impossible** to stop using food!

I think this analogy is invalid. I don't believe all foods are drug-foods at all, nor do I believe it's a CARB addiction, because broccoli is a carb and I have yet to see someone addicted to broccoli. While to some extent different foods are drug foods to different people, I believe there really is a lowest common denominator pool of foods that are NEVER drug foods that we can all eat in any amount without getting any kind of intoxicated. Those are the foods I consider gold standard foods. There are also several common-denominator foods, including lowcarb ones, that are almost always problem/drug foods to overweight emotional eaters.

This might not apply to newer lowcarbers, but I think it DOES apply to any lowcarber who has been struggling for a long time with staying on lowcarb consistently, AND also to folks who are staying on lowcarb, but who have stopped far short of receiving all the weight loss and health benefits. In my opinion, the reason it is so seemingly impossible to get further along in the journey from those places is because we are wrestling with trying to control or merely moderate our use of drug-foods we have become physically and emotionally addicted to, including "legal" low carb ones, and we are not willing to acknowledge this in our eating choices. I've said this many times before, but I believe this is tantamount to the same miserable situation as an alcoholic trying to manage on a tablespoon of vodka a day.

That is a God-awful place to be stuck. I know because I stayed stuck there myself for the first 21 months of my lowcarb journey. Actually I'd say that by living as a yo-yo dieter before that, it's the hellish place I was stuck for almost 30 ears.

That is why I advise JUST FORGET ABOUT YOUR ISSUES...for now. There is more important (and more simple!) work to do first. Simply stop the drug foods, stop the "vodka" and just go ahead and PLAN and live your life, one meal at a time, one hour at a time, without that little hit of numb. You have to go through a VERY LONG period of "detox" first. Just eat plentifully but pure, and you will slowly learn that you can do that through every situation. Do it no matter what anybody else in your world—your partner, friends or your children—eats, or would like for you to eat. Just take that one GIANT step, and then be prepared to wait for a VERY long time, usually until after you've lost almost all your excess weight and maintained it for a long while, until the insights start to come. (That wait took almost 2 years of abstinence for me.)

Because just like an alcoholic, because our addictions are physical in addition to psychological, even if and when the insights and issues finally do start coming to light, we're *still* not going to be able to have even a tablespoon of vodka without putting our hard-earned growth and recovery in serious jeopardy, not without beginning to backslide slowly, or falling head-first overnight, back into the abyss of trying to fight our physical addictions.

I haven't exactly "worked out" even one of my issues. I'm pretty sure I never will work any of them "out" (as in "gone"). The only change in me is that I can really acknowledge that I do have them and am able to sort of live in peace alongside them. Put more simply, I can now live with myself and some of my own past hurts and resentments, and my current inconsistencies and failings. Mostly this is/was about my inability to achieve my own (impossible) version of perfection.

I now can see that my eating behaviors were quite effectively keeping me from even *seeing* those issues, keeping me distracted because I was over-afraid to see or feel them. So I covered those fears by "stress eating" which created more glaring issues for myself—my health and weight problems.

I always honestly believed that my life would be damned near perfect if I just weren't fat and struggling with that constantly. Well surprise surprise, it's not. But even with many more big problems and issues than I ever realized I had, I'm immeasurably happier and at peace this way. The issues I was making for myself were far worse! The hellish place of fighting what I had to do was much more hellish than just going ahead and making the changes.

Everybody has issues—both real life and emotional challenges. That is the adult human state. Addicts just don't want to know about them because we're under the mistaken impression that those issues might "destroy" us, that our issues are different and special, somehow worse than those that other mere mortals face. Someone once

said something I thought was profound that I have never forgotten: “There can be nothing inside of you that is bigger than you are.”

**Lora went on to say: I also see what you are talking about when you say how long will I continue to eat the things that make my skin bad and make me fat. I need to ask myself that question..."How long will I"? "Why do I continue to do this to myself? I agree Adele, that I have work to do....both on the inside and out.**

See Lora, I think that's just too big, too much work, it is self-defeating, and it is also (conveniently?) setting yourself up to be overwhelmed right from the get-go. Ever seen those circus acts where one guy tries to keep 8 plates balanced and spinning on 8 sticks at the same time—then adds even MORE plates? I've always thought of that as a metaphor for what most of us face in life. Now I can see that when I was eating wrong, when I was drugged-up in a food-fog, it was like trying to do that on roller skates. It's hard enough just to keep a couple of the plates in the air.

Stop asking why, you're procrastinating! Just fix your diet—just take off your skates. Fix it and be done with it, stop trying to bargain or negotiate with it, stop fighting what you really have to do, no matter that it's fair or hard, and then just let your new life, your issues, slowly reveal themselves to you, in all their inconsistency and all their crazy human imperfection. There will be some GOOD insights in there too, you know, and eventual (imperfect!) peace if you can abide to that place! That's the best part, that is what is waiting at the “end”—a blessed end to the war we've been having within ourselves seemingly forever. You don't need to know WHY, you can't talk, research, think, or feel your way to peace. You have to behave/abstain yourself to get it, and keep abstaining to keep it.

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